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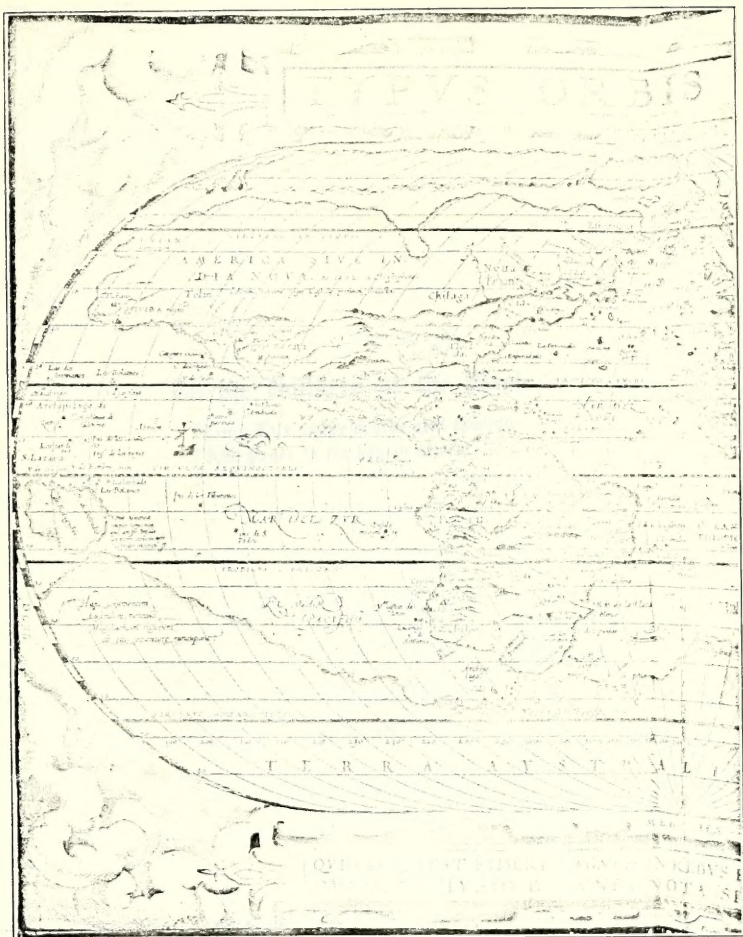
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WESTERN HEMISPHERE OF TYPUS ORBIS TERRARUM  
From Ortelius 1585, and Hakluyt, 1589



**"To the Builders of the West:**

**"Long Life to the hearts still beating**

**"And Peace to the hearts at rest". . .**





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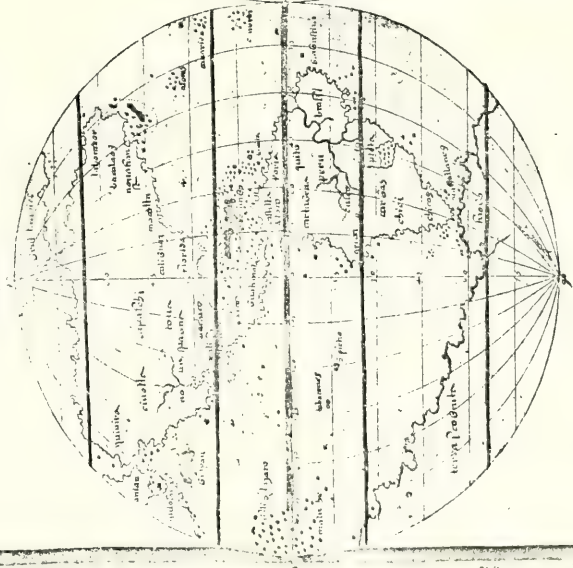
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## CHAPTER I

### PREHISTORIC NORTHWEST AMERICA

The Colony of Vancouver Island, constituted in 1849, was the first British Colony to be formally established in the northwestern region of North America. It was not until 1858 that British Columbia became a geographical expression. In that year the Crown Colony of British Columbia was called into being by act of the Imperial Parliament, although its northern boundary as it exists today was not so defined until 1863. The new colony in the North Pacific was formed out of the territory hitherto loosely called New Caledonia, which term was applied generally, both before and after the Oregon Treaty of 1846, to the country lying to the north of the forty-ninth parallel. The district of New Caledonia, however, was not really so extensive as the preamble of the Act of 1858 might lead one to imagine, for it can scarcely be claimed that it extended far beyond the limits assigned by the Reverend A. G. Morice, who defines the territory as that vast tract of land "lying between the Coast Range and the Rocky Mountains, from  $51^{\circ} 30'$  to  $57^{\circ}$  of latitude north." The central interior was named New Caledonia by Simon Fraser, of the North-West Company of Montreal, who built Fort St. James at the outlet of Stuart Lake in 1806.

Capt. George Vancouver in his famous survey of the western seaboard of North America named the coasts he visited in the years 1792 and 1793 New Georgia, New Hanover and New Cornwall, but these titles scarcely survived the explorer. At the same time Vancouver gave the name of "Quadra and Vancouver" to the large island which guards the continental shore between parallels forty-eight and fifty. Two centuries before Capt. James Cook sailed on his third and last voyage to the Pacific Ocean, Sir Francis Drake, of the Golden Hynde, had given the name New Albion to the region of Northern California, a title which had a vogue in many successive generations of cartographers. The Spaniard, on the other hand, did



not divide the country into districts, he being content to designate the whole western seaboard of North America as "The Californias."

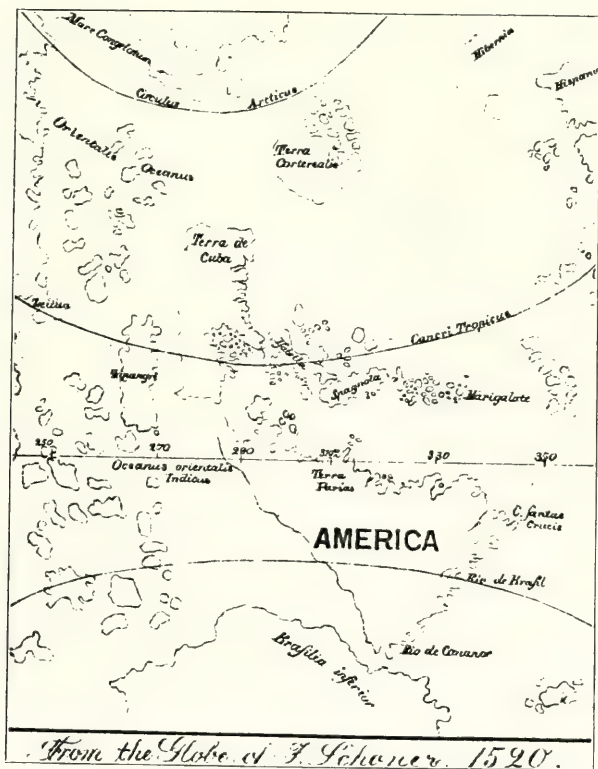
Although the country now known as British Columbia was not so named until 1858, nor its boundaries finally fixed until 1863, the history of the land reaches back into a far earlier period of discovery and exploration, when at least three great European powers were rivals in that virgin field, and farther back again into the pre-historic period when the aboriginal tribes held undisputed sway in and over the whole of it. Great Britain, Spain, and Russia all exhibited a keen interest in the distant and unknown region of Northwestern America concerning which conjecture was rife. Each of these nations, in fact, sought to establish sovereign jurisdiction in that quarter. Later the situation was complicated by the efforts of the young American nation to extend its territory westward to the Pacific Ocean.

The political boundaries of the territories of Northwestern America are the result of a process of elimination and evolution, or of progressive geographical discoveries, in the course of which Spain and Russia relinquished their claims, leaving the field to Great Britain and the United States of America. The rival claims of Great Britain and the United States gave rise to a long and bitter controversy which was not laid at rest until the Treaty of 1846 settled the Oregon boundary question. It is because the early history of the territory now known as the Province of British Columbia is fraught with international jealousies, as well as because it is concerned with the brilliant efforts of the navigator and the explorer, that it offers a peculiarly inviting field to the student and to the historian. The exploration of the northwest coast of North America culminated in a series of noble efforts no less worthy of admiration than the essays of European navigators on the eastern shores of the continent. The search for a broad and safe channel leading to the Orient, the dream of generations of navigators, melted into thin air with the charting of this coast.

The history of geographical discovery throughout the world is one of absorbing interest, for the making of it is sealed with the indomitable heroism of the explorer, who laboured in the face of untold difficulties to establish an accepted theory, or to prove its incorrectness. The slow and painful processes by which the true configuration of the earth has been established present all the features of









a long drawn out drama, in the course of which many strange and fascinating and cruel and repellent scenes are enacted. The curtain was rung up in the dim dawn of civilization when the primitive progenitors of the nations of today began their migrations towards the setting sun, for these early tribal movements seem to have taken their course from the diurnal journey of that heavenly body from east to west. The curtain will not drop upon the last act of this age-long drama, the *dramatis personae* for which have been drawn from all countries and peoples, until the last exploring expeditions to the northern and to the southern poles shall have set forth the extent and physical characteristics of the frozen wastes of the Arctic and Antarctic regions.

The configuration of the earth was always a lively subject of discussion amongst geographers and men of science, from the days of the classic theorists and Arabian mathematicians down to the Columbian age, whether that discussion were concerned with the shape of the planet or with the outline of some particular region of it. Thus the geographers of old fought among themselves as to whether the earth was spheroid or plane, and thus later generations waged a wordy conflict as to the configuration of the eastern part of Asia, and over the position of its islands of Zipangu or Japan, first reported to the modern world by Marco Polo. Then Columbus reported his epochal discovery of the Islands of the Indies, and another great discussion ensued as to the extent of the archipelago which was reputed to shield the shores of India, China and Japan from the prying eye of the European fortune-hunter.

The longing of the West for the East was expressed in the terms of that vigorous debate concerning a safe and navigable water way to India, which it was hoped that Columbus had at last discovered. Such is the strength of men's hopes that years after the general trend of the eastern seaboard of the North, Central and South America had been established, there were still some geographers who clung to the old theory of the archipelago and the open channel to the jewelled East. An eminent German geographer and cartographer, named Schöner, in the year 1520, published a map of Northern America, depicting that continent as a group of islands threaded by wide channels leading to the South Sea. Perhaps there is in all the history of the discovery of the New World no more pathetic exemplification of the old belief in the existence of a septentrional



water way to India than this chart of Schöner, which appeared after Waldseemüller's famous map of North and South America. It was on Waldseemüller's map that the name "America" appeared for the first time, that appellation being bestowed upon the southern continent in honour of Amerigo Vespucci, whose achievements otherwise might have been lost in oblivion, with those of many another "forgotten worthy."

After Balboa sighted the Pacific Ocean from the Isthmus of Darien, or Panama as it is now called, in 1513, the search for a channel through the continent leading thereto was pursued with renewed zeal. Northward and southward along the eastern coasts of the northern and southern continents the explorers of the great maritime powers of Europe groped their way, ever hoping to find the reputed channel, but their dreams were never realized. The coast stretched interminably northward and southward. At last Magellan found his strait at the far southern extremity of the southern continent and he, first of Europeans, set sail upon the ocean he named "Pacific." To the northward Cabot, Cortereal, Frobisher, Baffin and Hudson were no more successful, the entrance of the channel, if such existed, being sealed by Arctic mist and ice. Then it was, after years of futile effort, which none the less is a glorious chapter in the annals of seamanship, the quest of the Orient resolved itself into a search for the Strait of Anian, or, as it came to be called by a later generation of navigators, the Northwest Passage.

Naturally, the dreams of the navigators and the conjectures of the geographers with regard to the mythical passage leading to Japan and India had a marked effect upon the earliest cartography of Eastern America. Not otherwise is it with the western portion of the continent, which from age to age assumed all imaginable shapes and deformities as this or that geographer gave expression to his pet theory as to the configuration of the "backside" of America, as Sir Humphrey Gilbert called it. It is a matter of fact and history that the earliest extant European records of this region are not written accounts but crude cartographical representations which exhibit in rich abundance the eccentric notions of their several ages. Having delineated the eastern coastline of the continent with some degree of accuracy, and having failed to find the long-sought channel, the navigator turned his attention to the western seaboard until at last it was determined to search for the Pacific outlet of the Northwest



Passage, and so it may be said with truth that the search for this fabled communication led to the lifting of the veil from the vast domain which stretches from California to the Arctic Ocean between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean.

"*Now,*" writes the learned Dr. J. G. Kohl already quoted, "the huge bulk of the American block began to show something of its *true* proportions. At least, this was the case on its eastern side, which lay towards Europe, and with which the first European navigators soon became tolerably well acquainted, whilst the western side still remained untouched and hidden in darkness. On the maps of this period, America looks like one of those gigantic statues of gods or kings which we see carved in high relief in the rock-temples of Hindustan and Egypt. Their front parts, turned towards us, are tolerably well drawn and sculptured, but their backs still adhere to, and form a portion of, the shapeless mountainside. After Magellan had pierced through his strait into the open water to the west, when Pizarro had worked his laborious way down the coast of Peru, and when Cortez in the latter part of his career, in search of something like Japan or China, had navigated to the northwest and explored the shores of California, then, likewise, this western side was cut loose from the mass of the unknown, and began to assume at least the principal features of its true configuration."

Investigations of old maps and charts displayed in chronological order disclose the very earliest impressions of geographers respecting the physical features and ethnography of Northwest America. These maps also reveal the tedious progress which marked maritime discoveries in that quarter. No student of history will, therefore, think that undue emphasis has been laid upon this point. It is not possible, nor is it desirable, to set forth here the whole history of cartography as it relates to the North Pacific, but a general outline of the story is indispensable.

North America became known in detached pieces. And these detached pieces were believed to be separate islands or peninsulas of Northern Asia, which was prolonged towards the east much more than the southern part of that continent. The generality of the maps, which were made and published soon after Columbus, show the ocean between Eastern Asia and Western Europe filled with large and small islands. Some of them are the old islands mentioned by Marco Polo, while others are the new ones discovered by





Columbus and his companions, of which the most important were "Isabella" (Cuba), "Spagnuola" (Haiti), "Terra de Cuba" (North America), and "Sanctae Crucis" (South America). South America is always by far the most extensive of them all.

Dr. J. G. Kohl, in his valuable monograph entitled "Asia and America," or "A Historical Disposition Concerning the Ideas Which Former Geographers Had About the Geographical Relation of the Old and New World," admirably sets forth the difficulties of the early explorers in charting the results of their work and the fanciful conceptions they had of the geography of the country. This source will be freely drawn upon in the following pages.

Towards the time when the great exploring activity of the Portuguese and Spaniards developed itself, it was pretty generally admitted by the well-instructed cosmographers that the world was a globe of not very great dimensions, and that therefore "Asia must bear around this globe and must with its eastern end approach again somewhere to the western coast of Europe and Africa." The question was how far Asia stretched eastward and how long the distance was between it and Europe across the unknown waters. Marco Polo, the most celebrated traveller of the fourteenth century, was the great authority and oracle on this point. He had been to China and had actually visited the coasts of the Eastern Ocean. Marco Polo informed the world that in the ocean which laved the eastern coast of Asia was situated a large rich island, called "Zipangu" (the modern Japan) and besides whole archipelagos of smaller islands. Likewise on the side of Europe the navigators and discoverers of the Canary Islands and the Azores had created a belief that there were still more islands towards the west, amongst which were "Holy Brandan" and another larger island called "Antilia." But of all these islands said to be situated between Eastern Asia and Western Europe none was considered to be more worth exploring than that of "Zipangu," described by Marco Polo as the residence of an emperor and as being rich in gold, silver and other precious products.

Cortes and his companions in arms entered Mexico with ideas more or less similar to those with which Columbus and his contemporaries had entered the archipelago of the Antilles—that is to say with the expectation of finding Asiatic kingdoms and nations. When Cortes set out upon his discoveries on the Pacific he hoped







to reach Japan, which he thought to be near. When his successors arrived on the shores of Upper California, sometimes called Quivira, they reported upon their return that they had seen richly laden Chinese vessels. Whether these statements were founded on fact, or whether the wish was the father of the thought it is now too late to ascertain. Be that as it may, many geographers after Cortes accordingly painted North America, of which so far only the eastern coast was known, as connected with Northern Asia. They represented on their maps Mexico and other American places as Asiatic cities, adorned with mosques and minarets. They placed the sources of the Rio Colorado in Northern Asia, and they laid down the Chinese province of "Magni" as bordering on Mexico. When they heard of the wild bison, they thought these to be the herds of the nomadic tribes of Asia, and put down on their maps of this western region—sometimes called Cibola, after the famous mythical city of that name—inscriptions like the following: "Here the people live like the Tartars and raise large droves of cattle." In the British Museum they still preserve a Spanish map of the year 1560 on which the portrait of a true Chinese is posted in the center of the Mississippi valley and near him is an elephant grazing. The maps of the middle of the sixteenth century which adopted this view of a connection between Asia and America are numerous. This connection is found broadly marked on the French maps as well as on those of Italian, German and English cosmographers. Thus a manuscript chart of the year 1530, or thereabouts, that is to say soon after Cortes' conquest of Mexico, depicts the Chinese province Magni as bordering on that country. This old manuscript serves to illustrate in a certain manner the ideas and expectations which Cortes had when he set out from the western coast of Mexico upon the discovery and conquest of California.

Again the well-known Italian geographer, Paulo de Furlani, prepared a chart in 1560, on which the Pacific stretches northward only as far as the fortieth parallel. In common with other maps of the age this one connects North America and Asia on a very broad basis. "Cimpaga," or Japan, is placed at a distance of about twenty degrees of longitude from California. "Quisai," the famous Chinese port, Thibet and other Asiatic places are still very near. The Colorado river of the Californian Gulf, the entrance of which had been discovered by the Spaniards some twenty years before, has

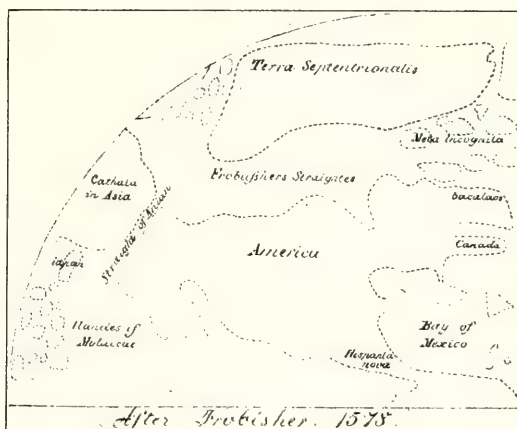
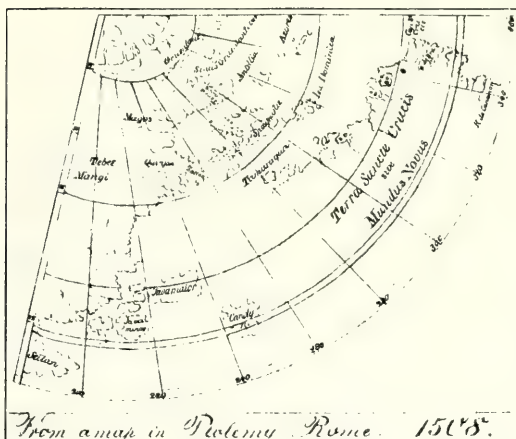


its source and headwaters in the interior of Asia and flows round the whole North Pacific. Such views were very common in the period after Cortes, still they were not generally adopted. There were always many navigators and mapmakers who still believed in the existence of open water or a strait between Asia and America. A report was current, which was indeed more or less credited, that Cortereal, a Portuguese sailor, had already in the year 1500 entered a strait in about sixty degrees north latitude and that he had called this strait after one of his brothers "the Strait of Anian." According to this tradition there was open water to the north of America and to the west again a narrow channel between the two continents which was likewise called the Strait of Anian. Eventually this name, which figures so prominently in the early history of the North Pacific, was almost exclusively applied to the western strait. The old Strait of Anian came to be called the Northwest Passage. The belief in the existence of the Strait of Anian became more or less general after the middle of the sixteenth century. Seemingly the first maps on which the mythical waterway is actually laid down are those of the Italian Zalteri of 1566 and of the German Ortelius of 1570. John Barrow states in his "Chronological History of Voyages in the Arctic Regions" that "the name of Anian was given to the strait supposed to have been discovered by Gaspar Cortereal, in honour of two brothers who accompanied him; but there are no grounds for such a supposition. . . . In the earliest maps Ania is marked as the name of the western-most part of America. Ania in the Japanese language is said to signify brother; hence, probably, the mistake."

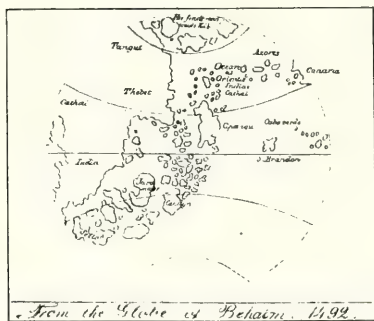
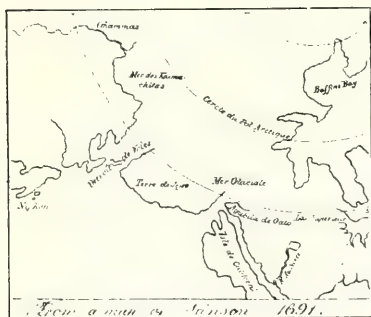
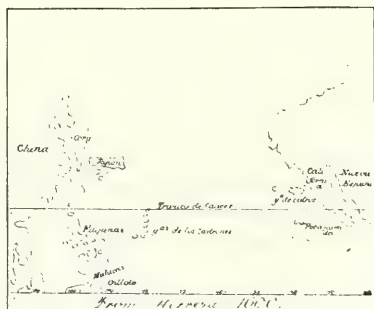
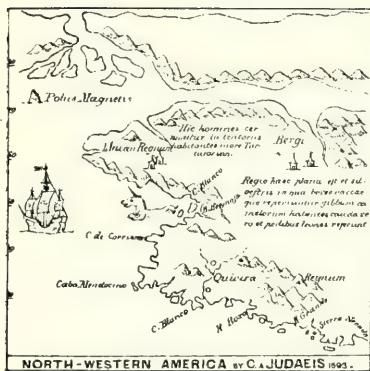
Turning again to the specific work of the early cartographers, attention may be called to the very famous map of the German Ruysch published in 1508 in the Roman edition of Ptolemaeus, the principal features of which are as follows: South America (*Terra Sancte Crucis* or *Mundus Novus*) appears as a detached country of which the southern and western coasts are not represented at all. An extensive archipelago lies to the north of South America, while Northwest America does not appear at all. The expanse of ocean between Asia and America is still very narrow, in the south about fifty degrees of longitude and in the north not quite twenty. As usual Asia stretches a long arm toward the northeast. Martin Frobisher embodied his views in a chart on which he showed in













what manner the strait discovered and named by him might be combined with the Strait of Anian, so giving safe conduct to China. This sketch was published in the work entitled "A True Discourse of the Late Voyages of Discovery for the Finding of a Passage to Cathay," which appeared in 1578. On the maps of Peter Apian, of Ortelius, of Sebastian Munster, of Martinez, of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, similar views were adopted though they sometimes vary with respect to latitude and dimensions given to the strait. Cornelius a Judaeis also contributed his conjectures touching the geographical puzzle of the age. The map of this worthy is a quite remarkable representation of the western seaboard of North America. On the headlands appear the names bestowed by the earliest Spanish navigators—Corrientes, Mendocino and Blanco. The northwestern peninsula is called Anian Regnum, while in the northeast a high rock is marked with the legend "Polus Magnetis." A Spanish galleon sails in mid-ocean and a fabulous monster disports itself in a great bay to the north of Cape Corrientes. This map is truly a wonderful conception, but it is no more remarkable than many other charts which appeared in later times.

In 1600 the Spanish historian Herrera shows a stunted northwest coast to the northward of which is a great sea which separates the Asian and American continents and stretches indefinitely towards the pole. The Moluccas, the Philippines and Japan are clearly marked. California appears as a peninsula, whereas ninety years later in a map after Sanson, the geographer of the King of France, that country becomes an island with a broad channel on the north leading to the "Mer Glaciale," which extends far into the continent. Thus it will be seen how from age to age the tide of conjecture ebbed and flowed. First of all there is the globe of Martin Behaim, made in 1492, which shows the eastern coast of Asia protected by a vast cluster of islands, notable among which stand Java and Japan (Cipangu). Behind this mythical constellation of islands is the coast of Asia bearing the names India, Cathai and Thebet. There is no sign of the North American continent, except it be the island called Brandon, midway between the outermost islands and the Cape Verde group. This map was succeeded by a notable series of grotesque delineations until at last the great British navigators of the eighteenth century set forth the true character of the coast.

At first the European nations confined their attention to the more southern parts of the Pacific so that the northern expanse of this

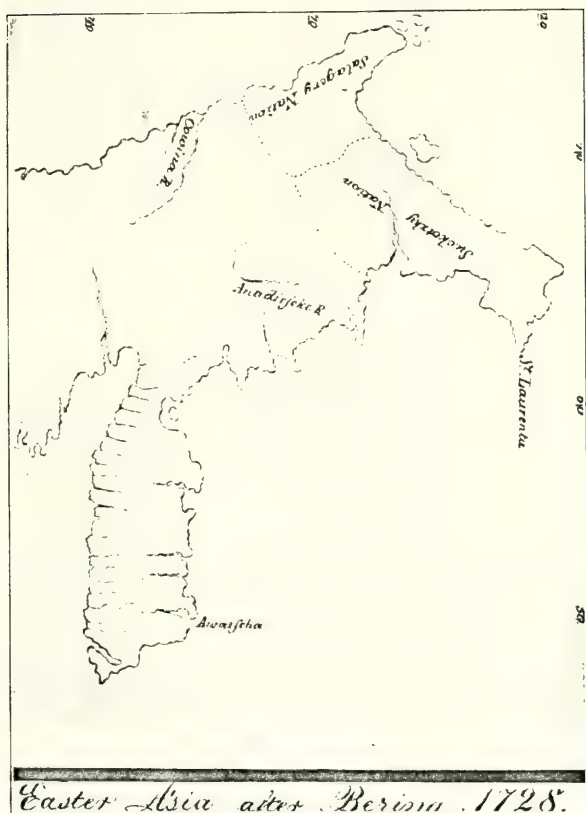


broad ocean for a long time was completely neglected. The Dutch did not advance beyond Japan which they had already reached in 1643. The Spaniards did not proceed beyond California, known to them for two and a half centuries, while the English, who under Drake had been on the northwest coast in 1578, did not make their appearance again until the last quarter of the eighteenth century. "Everybody," says Kohl, "seems to shun those stormy, cold, useless regions, and the world remained in total ignorance about this part of the globe until a new nation appeared on the coast of Northeastern Asia, which gave the sign for an earnest exploring activity in these regions, and which at last conducted this long agitated geographical question to a satisfactory solution." The Russians had passed the dividing mountain ridge between Asia and Europe at the end of the sixteenth century and had worked their way through the whole of Siberia towards the east and the northern sea. Already in the year 1648 Deschnev, one of those enterprising Cossak adventurers, with a few companions had circumnavigated the whole northeast end of Asia, from the mouth of the Lena through Bering Strait to the northern coast of Kamchatka. But Deschnev did not realize the extent and importance of his discoveries. His reports remained for more than one hundred years hidden in the archives of Siberia and his voyage therefore achieved nothing for geography. It was left to Vitus Bering, a Dane in the service of Russia, to execute the first official and scientific exploration of Northeastern Asia. He penetrated the strait named after him without however seeing the coast of America, and brought home the first map of those regions which was founded upon an actual astronomical survey. This voyage was undertaken in the years 1728 and 1729. Bering's map shows Kamchatka for the first time in something like its true position. During his sojourn at the port of St. Peter and St. Paul, Bering received information concerning land to the eastward, and in 1741 he embarked upon his memorable enterprise to the northwestern extremity of the North American continent, making a landfall on the coast of Alaska. He was cast away upon his return voyage upon Bering Island of the Komandorskii group where he perished miserably with many of his crew, as related by the German naturalist, Steller, the historian of the expedition.

Europe heard only through vague rumours that the Russians had made discoveries to the east of Siberia and Kamchatka. Some be-







*Easter Asia after Berling 1728.*







lieved that they might have been in America. Others thought that the land seen by them might be a new country lying between Asia and America. How very vague and uncertain the opinions of European geographers were with respect to these Russian discoveries may best be shown by the inspection of certain maps which were published soon after Bering's ill-fated expedition. For instance Bellin's chart of 1748 exhibits in a quite remarkable manner the ignorance of European geographers with regard to the achievements of Bering. Of all the Russian discoveries scarcely anything is given. The northwest corner of the map bears the legend: "The Russians have come as far as this in the year 1743 (1741), but they have been shipwrecked on the shoals and drowned."

Northwestern America is indicated by a dotted line running from north to south as far as the Bay of Aguilar in California, with the inscription running along it: "Probably America goes as far as this." At the northern end of California is added the observation that "Here the sea begins to be very boisterous." As Kohl justly remarks, a more laconic report on the Russian discoveries could not have been made.

To this period also belongs the map of the French geographer Philippe Buache, made as he said after the memoirs of the astronomer De L'Isle, who accompanied the expedition of Bering across Siberia. Apart from the fact that Buache attempted to give the result of the Russian voyages in Bering Sea, his map is remarkable because it gives expression to the fabulous discoveries of the so-called Spanish Admiral de Fonte, who, so it was claimed, had penetrated the whole extent of the continent by means of a chain of rivers and lakes, which extended from the Pacific to the North Atlantic. He laid down all the great lakes and rivers which de Fonte was reported to have seen, as well as the "Sea of the West" which was entered by the strait claimed to have been discovered by the Greek Apostolos Valerianos, or Juan De Fuca, in 1592. Of Bering's discoveries little is shown except the island where the explorer died. Buache made the whole of Northwestern America a broken country of "curiously formed peninsulas and unfinished coast pieces." Strange as it may seem the chart of Buache and De L'Isle was considered authoritative and it was copied in many countries and by different geographers, who sometimes added to it a little of their own. Thus the English



geographer, Thomas Jefferys, combined in his maps of 1758 and 1764 the real discoveries of the Russians with the supposed explorations of the Chinese and Japanese, in addition to which he did not forget to show the routes of de Fonte and another mythical hero named Barnardo, who was also credited with having discovered the Strait of Anian. Nor is Juan De Fuca forgotten, witness the inscription: "West Sea disc. by Fuca." In other charts the vaunted exploits of the impostor Lorenzo Ferrer de Maldonado are seriously recorded.

At last in the year 1758 the Russian Academy of Sciences published an authentic and complete chart of the discoveries made by Bering and his companion Chirikoff. The coasts seen by those navigators are joined by dotted lines, which show the outlines of the seaboard as the members of the academy, particularly Müller, the historian of Siberia, thought them to be. Though the name America does not appear on this map, still it is evident that the Russian Academy thought the new country to be a part of that continent. It was supposed even that the islands of the Aleutian group formed a long peninsula, which error was only corrected by later discoveries. This map of the Russian Academy was now of course adopted and copied by all the geographers of Europe. It still left open a large field for speculation. Besides the old traditions concerning the discovery of a channel through, or to the northward of, the American continent, to which some map makers still adhere, other reports of certain discoveries made by the Chinese and Japanese gained credit in this age. It is interesting if nothing more to recall at this time, when the question of Oriental immigration is attracting such widespread attention, the fact that in 1761 the learned French sinologist, Deguignes, set forth in an ably written paper in the "*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*" (Vol. XXVIII) that he had found in the works of early Chinese historians a statement that, in the fifth century of our era, certain travellers of their race had discovered a country which they called Fusang, which from the direction and distance as described by them appeared to be Western America, and in all probability Mexico. The original document, says Charles G. Leland in his book entitled "*Fusang or the Discovery of America by Chinese Buddhist Priests in the Fifth Century*," on which the Chinese historians based their account of Fusang was the report of a Buddhist monk or missionary













named Hoei-shin in the year 499 A. D., who returned from a long journey to the East. This report was regularly entered in the year book or annals of the Chinese Empire, whence it passed, not only to the pages of historians, but also to those of poets and writers of romances, by whom it was so confused with absurd inventions and marvellous tales, that discredit has been thrown upon the entire narrative.

"The evidence offered," continues the author just mentioned, "in favour of the discovery of America by the Chinese Buddhists of the fifth century is very limited, but it has every characteristic of a serious state document, and of authentic history. It is distinctly recorded among the annals of the Empire. At the time these journeys were undertaken, thousands of monks, inspired by the most fanatical zeal, were extending their doctrines in every direction; and this they did with such success, that though Buddhism has now been steadily declining for many centuries, it still numbers more followers than Christianity, or any other religion on the face of the earth, for they are literally counted by hundreds of millions. And as their doctrines urged propagandism, it would be almost a matter of wonder if some of the missionaries of the faith had not found their way over an already familiar route."

These records open a fascinating field for speculation, and while they may not establish the right of the Chinese to claim the discovery of America for their race, yet the chain of general and presumptive evidence as to the discovery of this continent by the Norsemen in the eleventh century is scarcely stronger than the evidence contained in the old year books of the Celestial Empire touching the voyage of Hoei-shin. The claim of the Norsemen is based upon the sagas and folk-lore of their race while that of the Chinese is supported by contemporary state papers, or rather records, if Professor C. F. Neumann is correct. Perhaps one day it will be established beyond doubt that the honour of discovering the New World after all belongs to the ancient Chinese nation and not to Spain. But so far the enquiry has scarcely travelled beyond the limits of delightful surmise. It is indeed interesting, if not startling, to realize that perhaps America may not have been found by Europeans from the east but by Asiatics from the west.

It need only be added in this connection that there are authentic records of the wrecking of Chinese and Japanese junks on this coast



as late as the nineteenth century. Little more than fifty years ago a Chinese vessel was driven ashore near Cape Flattery, her unfortunate sailors being captured and held as slaves by the Indians of Neah Bay. James Douglas, then in charge of Fort Victoria, sent a force to demand the release of the prisoners, who were ultimately returned to their native land.

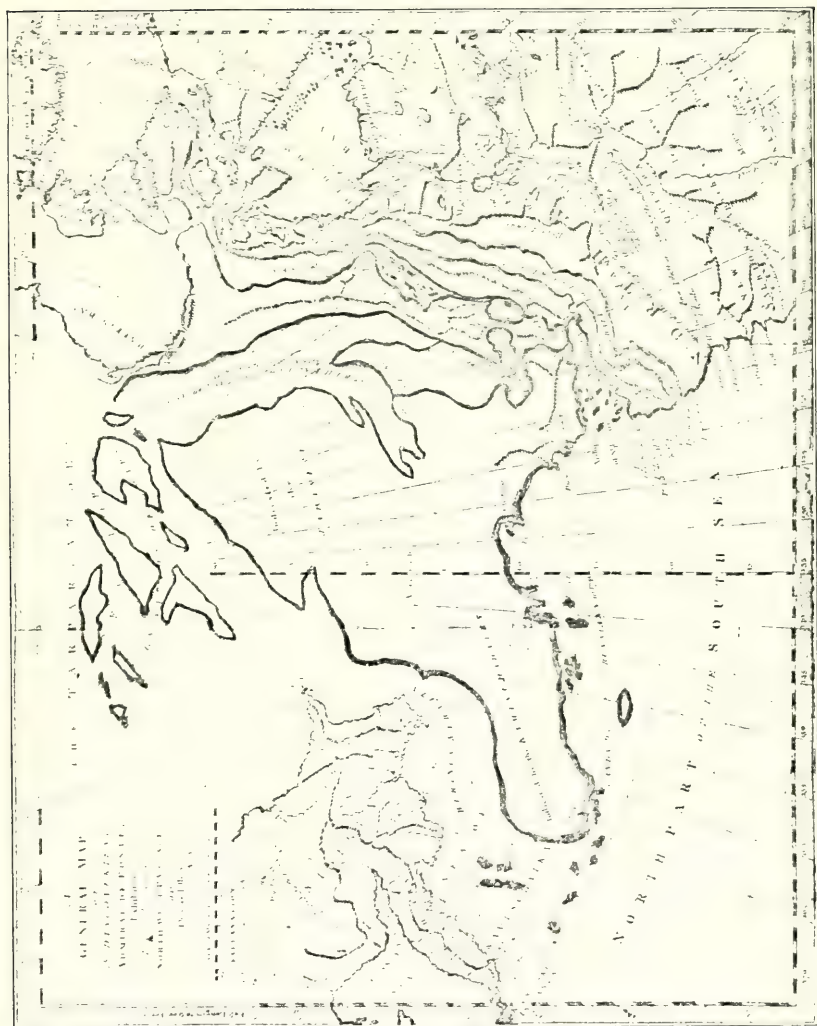
In days of old the alchemist at first carefully hugged his secret and for long years the world at large knew little or nothing of the results of his labours. With like jealousy governments guarded the information gained from their officers engaged in the exploration of the New World. Neither alchemist nor governments wished others to profit by their discoveries. Thus it came to pass that often and for many years the narratives of explorers were locked away in the archives of kings and councillors until the ink which preserved them faded with age. By reason of this secretiveness many invaluable manuscripts have been lost, or are even now only just coming to light, too late to establish territorial claims, or to be of value to any except the antiquarian.

No government guarded more carefully the records of its discoveries than did the government of Spain, and no government gained less by so doing. This point is of peculiar interest to the historian of British Columbia, because, for a time at least, if not forever, the whole history of this land might have been changed, if a different policy had been adopted. It is scarcely to be doubted that had Spain advertised her discoveries on the northwest coast, if only in the day of her waning power, it would have had no unimportant bearing on the controversies of later years touching the Nootka Affair and the Louisiana Purchase, even though the Spanish discoveries, before the day that Capt. James Cook landed on these shores, were, relatively speaking, of small value and extent.

The same ideals that impelled Christopher Columbus, in the face of ridicule and opposition, to sail on his adventurous quest in search of a direct route by water to India, inspired other navigators to search for a northwest passage through the continent of North America, even when it had been ascertained that the passage must be, if it existed at all, so far to the northward as to render it practically useless. The legacy bequeathed by the earliest explorers of America to those of later times was a persistent belief in the existence of the Strait of Anian, or a Northwest Passage. That faith acted indeed









as the lodestar of the navigators of three centuries, and the search for that mythical waterway inspired deeds of heroism and led to sacrifices and sufferings, nobly borne, that are scarcely equalled in all the annals of the sea. Years rolled on, mariner after mariner was lost, or returned to add some small stock of knowledge to that already acquired, but the result was that the belief gained ground that no such strait or passage existed. Opinions, however, are apt to cling to life long after practical men have lost in them all active interest. So it came to pass from time to time that there remained some men of standing in the scientific world who laboured to show from old records, or reputed discoveries, that the strait was there after all. A notable instance of such obstinacy was the effort of Buache to prove that the Portuguese, Lorenzo Ferrer de Maldonado, navigated the passage in the year 1588. M. Buache formulated his theory in a lecture given before the Academy of Sciences of Paris, Nov. 13, 1790, for which resurrection of an old story he became renowned in Europe. Twenty-two years later M. Amoretti published the narrative of Maldonado in a small quarto, which was printed in France in 1812 and in Italy the following year. Yet so perverse in its prejudices is human nature that, after Samuel Hearne's narrative of his journey to the mouth of the Coppermine River and the results of Captain Cook's third and last voyage to the Pacific had been given to the world, credence was nevertheless placed in a story so palpably false, in as far as the chief points of the relation were concerned.

No history of this period would be complete without a reference to the Bull of Pope Alexander VI which gave rise in after years to heated disputes, not only between Spain and Portugal, the immediate beneficiaries, but also between those countries and England and Holland. By that memorable ordinance, which was promulgated in 1493, the undiscovered world, from a point in Africa easterly to the Indies, was divided between the Kings of Spain and Portugal. The imaginary line, which demarked the spheres of activity of the two monarchs, ran from the North to the South Pole, a hundred leagues west of the Azores. The Pope's professed object was to prevent disputes "between Christian Princes" as to the domination over such territories and islands as might be discovered by their respective subjects.



The English seafarer from his island home, looked out upon the broad ocean, and, in the natural course of events, became the eager competitor of the Spaniard and the Portuguese. England did not acknowledge the right of the Pope to divide the undiscovered world between the two Catholic countries. Queen Elizabeth's characteristic reply to the Spanish ambassador, who had complained of the inroads of her subjects, sufficiently indicates the spirit of the English of all ages in that regard. The Virgin Queen remarked with asperity that the "Spaniards had drawn these inconveniences upon themselves by their severe and unjust dealings in their American commerce; for she did not understand why either her subjects, or those of any other European prince, should be debarred from traffic in the Indies; that, as she did not acknowledge the Spaniards to have any title, by donation of the Bishop of Rome, so she knew no right they had to any places other than those of which they were in actual possession; for that their having touched only here and there upon a coast, and given names to a few rivers or capes, were such insignificant things, as could in no ways entitle them to a propriety farther than in the parts where they actually settled, and continued to inhabit."

And so the English buccaneers sailed the high seas, levying tribute upon all and sundry with rare audacity, under the protection of, if not openly sanctioned by, the English government. Of these famous worthies, whose exploits have been so eloquently recorded by the historian Froude, there was none greater than Sir Francis Drake, the first of Englishmen, as indeed he was the first of Europeans, to visit the northwest coast, of which he took possession for Queen Elizabeth, at the same time naming it New Albion.

The period of scientific discovery as far as this seaboard is concerned began in the year 1774 with the arrival of the Spanish corvette *Santiago*, in command of Juan Perez. It but remains to be observed that in the last quarter of the eighteenth century the lines of exploration converged upon a land heretofore unexplored and unknown; for the first time reliable information concerning it became available, which supplanted the mythical and legendary accounts, till then the current coin of the geographers and cartographers who had given it their attention. Now the historian is concerned with the expeditions of the Spaniards from their estab-





FRENCH MAP OF NORTH AMERICA, CIRCA, 1775





lishments on the Mexican Pacific seaboard, of the Russians from their posts on the Kamchatkan Peninsula, of the British discoverers who used the Sandwich Islands as a base for their operations on the northwest coast, of the French explorers who followed the course of the British, of the American traders who, like the British, used the Sandwich Islands as a supply depot, of the overland expeditions of the Canadian fur traders, and with the westward movement of the people of the United States of America.

In summing up it may be said that the earliest history of the territory now known to the world as the Province of British Columbia is intimately associated with the apocryphal voyages of glib-tongued impostors and the vague conjectures of the geographer. To this early period belong the doubtful relations of Maldonado (1588), Juan de Fuca (1592), de Fonte (1640) and others, and all those charts and maps in which were embodied the loose impressions which led at last to the actual exploration of this vast extent of coastline. It will be seen then that by studying the first charts of the Pacific coast, the historian will be richly rewarded, for thereby would be revealed to him the many difficulties and uncertainties under which the explorer and map maker laboured. He will learn that tardily and gradually the time comes when knowledge ousts conjecture and rumour from their place of honour and the coastline assumes its true shape, until after a lapse of more than two hundred and fifty years, Capt. George Vancouver's great chart of 1798 gives the first accurate representation of what is now the western seaboard of Canada.



## CHAPTER II

### APOCRYPHAL VOYAGES

It is the inveterate tendency of the human mind to presume that the great inventions which have enriched human life issue full grown from the brain of the inventors, like Minerva from the head of the Father of the Gods. As a matter of fact and of history this has never been the case. Months and years of unsuccessful experiments have always preceded the birth of an idea, and genius, which has been defined as a transcendant capacity for taking pains brings forth its products only after

“long days of labour and nights devoid of ease.”

And as it has been with great inventions, the offspring of Science, so has it been with the origin of the great discoveries on land and sea. The Earth feels many a blow before she yields up the riches concealed in her bowels, and the lonely keel of the navigator has ploughed many a barren sea before finding the passage or the harbourage, which has been the quest of the world of his time, and it has always remained a problem to the historian of an after-age to declare with precision how far premature claims to discoveries of unknown waters and countries have been founded on conscious or unconscious imposture.

The story of the discovery of the Northwest Passage has formed no exception to this apparently universal rule—that the era of historical fact has always been preceded by a mythical age. But there were other and political causes which made the exploration of the northwest coast of America so long in coming. The Spaniard, who dominated the southern seas for centuries, was continually haunted by the fear of his Dutch and English rivals. Obstacles therefore, of which there are authentic records, were placed in the way of foreign adventurers.



Lack of space renders it impossible to deal with all the accounts of the voyages through the Strait of Anian which were feigned in the prehistoric age. Three stories, however, stand out with such prominence that they cannot be overlooked by a faithful chronicler, specially since they have obtained a certain amount of credence among men of sobriety and common sense. On the other hand it must be conceded at once, that the fact that the accounts of these voyages were without exception published many years after the dates at which the voyages themselves were declared to have been undertaken, begets an element of suspicion as to the genuineness of the narratives.

Foremost among these stands the story of Lorenzo Ferrer de Maldonado, a narrative at one time regarded as authentic by men whose knowledge and attainments would, it might be supposed, have prevented their being carried away by the impostures of an inventive quack. A manuscript is preserved to this day, written by Maldonado, verbosely entitled, "A Relation of the discovery of the Strait of Anian, made by me, Captain Lorenzo Ferrer de Maldonado, in 1588, in which is described the course of the navigation, the situation of the place, and the manner of fortifying it." Briefly, it recites that the writer—a Portuguese—crossed the North Atlantic to Davis Strait, and moving on, entered the Northwest Passage, or, as he called it, the Strait of Anian. With wind abeam he sailed to the North East, to the North-North-East, and again to the North, and at last reached Tartary, or Cathaia, not far from the coast, where, it was surmised, must be the metropolis of Tartary. Sailing on for fifteen days he reached the open sea. "This we knew to be the South Sea,"—so runs the chronicle,—“where are situated Japan, China, the Moluccas, India, New Guinea and the land discovered by Captain Quirus, with all the coast of New Spain and Peru.” A fairly full description of the Strait is given and the coast of Asia described, while probability is lent to the tale by a description of the harbour at the entrance of the Strait, where a large vessel of eight hundred tons burden was encountered.

The cargo of this vessel, it is solemnly recorded, consisted of "Brocades, silks, porcelain, feathers, precious stones and gold." The crew were said to be Hanseatics from Archangel, so that, in order to understand each other, the voyagers were obliged to converse in Latin. Possibly this account of the meeting with the strange merchantman is the origin of de Fonte's story of his encounter with the



Boston ship at the South Sea entrance to the mythical passage. The paper concludes with plans for the occupation and defence of the Strait. It is significant that nothing is said as to the circumstances which induced the navigator to return to Europe by the passage which he claimed to have discovered, instead of proceeding to the Philippine Islands or to a Mexican port.

The record of the so-called discoveries of Bartholomew de Fonte is beset with discrepancies somewhat analogous to the tale of Maldonado. De Fonte's narrative, setting forth those discoveries, was not published until April, 1708, although the voyage itself was said to have taken place in 1640. In a letter to a monthly publication, entitled "Memoirs for the Curious," are contained remarkable statements respecting the adventure. Astonishing as the story is, it was yet believed by many sailors of that credulous age, although there was no information with regard to de Fonte that could be called in any sense authentic. All that is now known is that an officer of that name was employed in the Pacific by the Spaniards, all else is outside the region of fact.

According, however, to the story as printed, de Fonte sailed on the 3rd of April, 1640, from Lima, in the ship *San Spiritus*, accompanied by Don Diego Pennelossa, in the *San Lucia*, Pedro de Barnardo in the *Rosario*, and Philip de Ronquillo in the *King Philip* (1). Arriving at the entrance of an archipelago which he named San Lazarus, he sailed in an easterly direction into a large inlet, which by means of a chain of rivers and lakes opened into the Sea of Ronquillo, that in turn communicated directly with the North Sea, or Atlantic Ocean, between Baffin and Hudson Bays. It is of course quite natural that de Fonte's narrative should at first have excited the curiosity of seamen and geographers. But it soon came to be looked upon as a hoax, rather than as an authentic record. However, there are always men, not only among mariners but also among men of science, ready to give credence to any strange story of discovery, and an echo of Maldonado and de Fonte's fabrication is found in the instructions given to navigators of a later age, that great care should be taken in examining that portion of the Northwest Coast where these navigators had placed the openings leading to their waterways.

The two stories of Maldonado and of de Fonte have of course long since been exploded. That the events recorded took place at





all is a clear impossibility. That the tales were believed, however, proves how little was known of the northwestern part of North America, even as late as the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It is strange that Thomas Jefferys, geographer to the King, should have prepared a monograph in which it is gravely taken for granted that the account of these voyages was accurate in all its details as reported. Jefferys' work was published in 1768 and with it appeared his "General map of the discoveries of de Fonte," which shows the chain of rivers and lakes stretching across the continent in an easterly direction from the Pacific to the North Atlantic. But it was not the first time in history that men of learning have been hypnotized by impostors.

There is the celebrated defence of Maldonado by the French scientist, Buache, the publication of which created a stir among the learned societies of Europe. Buache laboured to prove that Maldonado was not an impostor but a much maligned explorer, whose discoveries would yet redound to his credit. All this, because some historian or litterateur in groping amongst musty archives, had unearthed a copy of Maldonado's manuscript. In Spain it had been long known that he was a man of no character. Yet, in spite of expostulations, the spirited defence of Buache was in some quarters received with deference. Just at that time the unfortunate Malaspina was being despatched by the Spanish Government upon a scientific expedition to the North Pacific, and so great was the influence of the French geographer that he was particularly instructed to search for the supposed Strait of Maldonado. His examination, of course, revealed the fact that there was no strait such as that which had been described so minutely.

In William Goldson's "Observations on the Passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans," which appeared in 1793 the historian finds yet another learned defence of Maldonado and de Fonte, and a most extravagant map purporting to show their discoveries. That Jefferys, Buache, Amoretti, Goldson, and other learned men, should have been so easily misled, is indeed an ironical comment on the adage that "knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers." It would be almost impossible to believe that they had been so beguiled if their own maps and writings did not prove it.

A third voyage must now be considered, which, while not to be placed in the same class as the fictions already mentioned, yet may





THE TITLE PAGE OF PURCHAS, HIS PILGRIMES  
From the Copy in the Legislative Library, Victoria



at least be maintained to be apocryphal. The account of Juan de Fuca's voyage by Michael Lok created a stir in the world of adventure. Indeed, from the time of its publication by Samuel Purchas in "His Pilgrimes" in the year 1625, until the present time, there have not been wanting those who have stoutly averred their belief in the authenticity of the narrative. The voyage was said to have taken place in the year 1592, exactly one hundred years after Columbus had discovered the West Indies.

The arguments for and against the veracity of de Fuca's account may be briefly summarized thus: As in all the apocryphal voyages, the first fact to be noted is that nothing was known or said of de Fuca until many years after the reputed date of the voyage. The story rests entirely upon the testimony of Michael Lok, who was a reputable merchant trading in the Levant. It is worthy of notice in this connection that Purchas does not say where or how he got Lok's narrative. Perhaps he found it among the papers of Hakluyt, whose literary executor he was. Lok's statement that he had sent an account of the voyage to Hakluyt lends colour to this theory. In that event, it is only fair to add, the stories may have been reported some time before Purchas "His Pilgrimes" appeared in 1625.

Lok's Memoir, if such it may be called, is entitled "A Note made by me Michael Lok the elder, touching the Strait of Sea, commonly called Fretum Anian, in the South Sea, through the North-west passage of Meta incognita."

He begins:—"When I was at Venice, in April, 1596, happily arrived there an old man, about threescore yeares of age, called commonly Juan de Fuca, but named properly Apostolos Valerianos, of Nation a Greeke, borne in the Iland Cefalonia, of Profession a Mariner, and an ancient Pilot of Shippes. This man being come lately out of Spaine, arrived first at Ligorno, and went thence to Florence in Italie, where he found one John Dowglas, an Englishman, a famous Mariner, ready comming for Venice, to be Pilot of a Venetian Ship, named Ragasona, for England, in whose company they came both together to Venice. And John Dowglas being well acquainted with me before, he gaue me knowledge of this Greeke Pilot, and brought him to my speech: and in long talke and conference between vs, in presence of John Dowglas: this Greeke Pilot declared in the Italian and Spanish languages, thus much in effect as followeth.



“First he said, that he had bin in the West Indies of Spaine by the space of fortie yeeres, and had sailed to and from many places thereof, as Mariner and Pilot, in the seruice of the Spaniards.

“Also he said, that he was in the Spanish Shippe, which in returning from the Ilands, Philippinas and China, toward Noua Spania, was robbed and taken at the Cape California, by Captaine Candish Englishman, whereby he lost sixtie thousand Duckets, of his owne goods.

“Also he said, that he was Pilot of three small Ships which the Vizeroy of Mexico sent from Mexico, armed with one hundred men, Souldiers, vnder a Captain, Spaniards, to discover the Straits of Anian, along the coast of the South-Sea, and to fortifie in that Strait, to resist the passage and proceedings of the English Nation, which were feared to passe through those Straits into the South Sea. And that by reason of a mutinie which happened among the Souldiers, for the Sodomie of their Captaine, that voyage was overthrowne, and the Ships returned backe from California coast to Nōva Spania, without any effect of things done in that Voyage. And that after their returne, the Captaine was at Mexico punished by justice.

“Also he said, that shortly after the said Voyage was so ill ended, the said Viceroy of Mexico sent him out againe Anno 1592, with a small Carauela and a Pinnace, armed with Mariners onely, to tollow the said Voyage, for discovery of the same Straits of Anian, and the passage thereof, into the Sea which they call the North Sea, which is our North-west Sea. And that he followed his course in that Voyage West and North-west in the South Sea, all alongst the coast of Nova Spania, and California, and the Indies, now called North America (all which Voyage hee signified to me in a great Map, and a Sea-card of mine owne, which I laied before him) vntill hee came to the Latitude of fortie seuen degrees, and that there finding that the Land trended North and North-east, with a broad inlet of Sea, between 47. and 48. degrees of Latitude: hee entred therein, sayling therein more than twentie dayes, and found that Land trending still sometime North-west and North-east, and North, and also East and South-eastward, and very much broader Sea then was at the said entrance, and that hee passed by diuers Ilands in that sayling. And that at the entrance of this said Strait, there is on the North-west coast thereof, a great Hedland or Iland, with an exceeding high Pinacle, or spired Rocke, like a piller thereupon.





"Also he said, that he went on Land in diuers places, and that he saw some people on Land, clad in Beasts skins: and that the Land is very fruitful, and rich of gold, Siluer, Pearle, and other things, like Nova Spania.

"And also he said, that he being entred thus farre into the said Strait, and being come into the North Sea already, and finding the Sea wide enough everywhere, and to be about thirtie or fortie leagues wide in the mouth of the Straits, where hee entred; hee thought he had now well discharged his office, and done the thing which he was sent to doe: and that hee not being armed to resist the force of the Saluage people that might happen, hee therefore set sayle and returned homewards againe towards Nova Spania, where hee arrived at Acapulco, Anno 1592, hoping to be rewarded greatly of the Viceroy, for this seruice done in this said Voyage.

"Also he said, that after his coming to Mexico, hee was greatly welcommed by the Viceroy, and had great promises of great reward, but that having sued there two yeares time, and obtaining nothing to his content, the Viceroy told him, that he should be rewarded in Spaine of the King himself very greatly, and willed him therefore to goe into Spaine, which Voyage hee did performe.

"Also he said, that when he was come into Spaine, he was greatly welcomed there at the Kings Court, in wordes after the Spanish manner, but after long time of suite there also, hee could not get any reward there neither to his content. And that therefore at the length he stole away out of Spaine, and came into Italie, to goe home againe and liue among his owne Kindred and Countymen, he being very old.

"Also he said, that hee thought the cause of his ill reward had of the Spaniards, to bee for that they did vnderstand very well, that the English Nation had now giuen ouer all their voyages for discoverie of the North-west passage, wherefore they need not feare them any more to come that way into the South Sea, and therefore they needed not his seruice therein any more.

"Also he said, that in regard of this ill reward had of the Spaniards, and vnderstanding of the noble minde of the Queene of England, and of her warres maintayned so valiantly against the Spaniards, and hoping that her Maiestie would doe him justice for his goods lost by Captaine Candish, he would bee content to goe into England, and serue her Maiestie in that voyage for the discoverie



perfectly of the North-west passage into the South Sea, and would put his life into her Maiesties hands to performe the same, if shee would furnish him with onely one ship of fortie tunnes burden and a Pinnasse, and that he would performe it in thirtie dayes time, from one end to the other of the Streights. And he willed me to write into England.

"And vpon this conference had twice with the said Greeke Pilot, I did write thereof accordingly into England vnto the right honourable the old Lord Treasurer Cecill, and to Sir Walter Raleigh and to Master Richard Hakluyt that famous Cosmographer, certifying them hereof by my Letters. And in the behalfe of the said Greeke Pilot, I prayed them to disburse one hundred pounds of money, to bring him into England with my selfe, for that my owne purse would not stretch so wide at that time. And I had answere here of by Letters of friends, that this action was very well liked, and greatly desired in England to bee effected; but the money was not readie, and therefore this action dyed at that time, though the said Greeke Pilot perchance liueth still this day at home in his owne Countrie in Cefalonia, towards the which place he went from me within a fortnight after this conference had at Venice.

"And in the meantime, while I followed my owne businesse in Venice, being in Law suit against the Companie of Merchants of Turkie, and Sir John Spencer their Gouvernour in London, to recouer my pension due for my office of being their Consull at Aleppo in Turkie, which they held from me wrongfully. And when I was (as I thought) in a readinesse to returne home into England, for that it pleased the Lords of her Maiesties honourable Priuie Counsell in England, to looke unto this Cause of my Law suit for my reliefe; I thought that I should be able of my owne purse to take with me into England the said Greeke Pilot. And therefore I wrote unto him from Venice a letter, dated in July, 1596, which is copied here-under."

Michael Lok's various efforts to communicate with Juan de Fuca were of no avail, as is shown by the last paragraph of his narrative, which reads:

"And yet lastly, when I my selfe was at *Zante*, in the moneth of June 1602. minding to passe from thence for *England* by Sea, for that I had then recovered a little money from the Companie of *Turkie*, by an order of the Lords of the Priuie Counsell of England, I wrote



another Letter to this *Greeke Pilot to Cefalonia*, and required him to come to me to *Zante*, and goe with mee into England, but I had none answere thereof from him, for that as I heard afterward at *Zante*, he was then dead, or very likely to die of great sicknesse."

Here ends the story of Juan de Fuca, as related by Michael Lok. It will at once occur to the critic as being suspicious that Lok should have kept this information to himself for so many years, particularly when the efforts of all the seafaring nations had been directed towards the discovery of the Northwest Passage. If a discovery of such importance had been made in 1592, and knowledge of it had been gained in 1596, it may well be asked why it was that Michael Lok did not give his account to the world until 1625. Of the facts related it is worthy of notice that an opening does exist on the northwest coast near the latitude assigned to it by de Fuca, and that off the Cape Flattery of Captain Cook there is a pinnacle or spiral rock; also that that opening does lead to an archipelago and to sheets of water which stretch southward, eastward and northward; and the writers who have taken up the cudgels on behalf of de Fuca point to these and other correlated statements as conclusive evidence that the voyage belongs to the region of fact, rather than to the realm of fancy. It is impossible, they claim, that any man should have so accurately described a region without some personal knowledge of it.

On the other hand, it may be pointed out that de Fuca's narrative does not differ greatly from the accounts of other mariners of that age. The fact should not be overlooked that de Fuca according to his own statement was hoping to obtain command of an expedition to explore the coast of northwestern America, and it was to his advantage to colour his story with extravagant descriptions of the lands he claimed to have discovered. It should also be borne in mind that the belief in the existence of the Strait of Anian was then general throughout the world.

Strangely enough, however, in the very quarter where one should expect to find confirmation of de Fuca's explorations, one finds instead absolute disbelief in his pretensions. In all the great mass of material gathered in the Archives of the Indies at Seville, not one word is to be found with regard to de Fuca, and the same remark applies to the archives of Mexico. Seeing that the Greek claimed that he had been sent by the Viceroy of that country upon an important mission, and that upon his return he had reported to that



official the results of his voyage, there should be at least some document relating thereto in the Spanish Archives. But the records of New Spain are silent upon the subject. Navarette, the Spanish historian, to whom was confided the task of preparing the official version of Spanish explorations on the Northwest coast, claims in his account of the voyage of the *Sutil* and *Mexicana* that there is no information in the Spanish Archives respecting the "ancient pilot of ships." This is an important point, because de Fuca averred that he had spent some time at the court of Spain seeking a dispensation from the King to pursue his explorations to the north of California.

Therefore, de Fuca's story rests wholly and solely upon the narrative of the Englishman, Michael Lok. Lok claims that he laid the matter before Burleigh, Queen Elizabeth's great minister, Sir Walter Raleigh and Richard Hakluyt "that famous Cosmographer," but without result. And yet the English records are as dumb with regard to that transaction as are those of Spain and Mexico. Moreover, as de Fuca himself remarks, Spain had long given up the search for the Strait of Anian, because she regarded such a discovery as being inimical to her own interests. She dreaded it for the simple reason that it would encourage the operations of the European buccaneers in the Pacific, which she had long looked upon as her own peculiar preserve. So secure had Spain been in the possession of that great ocean (always excepting the forays of Drake, Cavendish and the Dutch free-booters), that she left her ships, which plied that ocean, almost unprotected. The galleons sailing from the Philippines to Panama were not armed to resist attack, and that explains why they fell so easy a prey to the buccaneers of other nations.

It would certainly seem *a priori* unlikely that in view of these facts Spain should have fitted out an expedition for the examination of that very passage the discovery of which she so much feared.

It has been seen that de Fuca claimed that he was upon the *Santa Anna* when that vessel was captured by Cavendish off Cape San Lucas in 1588 and that he lost sixty thousand ducats on that occasion. Now, in Cavendish's own account of that incident, which was published by Hakluyt in 1589, no such person is mentioned. In terse Elizabethan English Cavendish relates: "wee came into a Bay called Masacalan, where we had fruite and fish, but were in great danger of our enemies: We trauersed from thence unto the Southermost cape of California, where beating up and downe we discovered a Port called





by the Spaniards Agua Segura, and found good store of fresh water: we lay off & on off this cape untill the fourth of Nouember, on which day in the morning wee espied the goodly shippe comming from the Philippinas called *Saint Anna* the great, being of seuen hundreth tunnes: we chased her untill noone, so fetching her up, we gave them fight to the losse of twelve or fourteene of their men, and the spoyle and hurt of many more of them, whereupon at last they yeelded unto us: in this conflict we lost onely two of our men. So on the sixt of the sayde Nouember we went into the Port of Agua Segura, where wee ankered and put nine score prisoners on land: and ransacking the great shippe, wee laded our owne two shippes with fourtie tunnes of the chieftest marchandise, and burnt all the rest as well shippe as goods, to the quantitie of sixe hundred tunnes of rich marchandise, because we were not able to bring it away: This was one of the richest vessels that euer sayled on the Seas, and was able to haue made many hundreds wealthie, if we had had meanes to haue brought it home."

Later authorities, amongst whom may be mentioned the late Professor George Davidson, for many years employed on the Pacific sea-board in the service of the Coast and Geodetic Survey of the United States, and a geographer of international repute, does not hesitate to affirm that Michael Lok's account of de Fuca was a mere tissue of untruths. Without going quite as far as that, it may at least be said that it is in a high degree probable that Juan de Fuca's account of his discoveries should be placed in the list of apocryphal voyages. It is unlikely that further evidence will throw fresh light on that much disputed point. There will always be some who are content to abide by the Lok document, while others will as firmly maintain that it yields far from satisfactory evidence that the Greek pilot was the first European to visit the Strait that bears his name.

This brief notice of Juan de Fuca's reputed voyage may well be concluded with the clear-cut statement of the learned Dr. J. G. Kohl, who in his "History of Discovery and Exploration on the Coasts of the United States" remarks that Navarette asserts "that no navigator of the name of Juan de Fuca or Apostolos Valerianos was ever at any time known in Spain or mentioned by contemporary Spanish writers; nor is there extant any record of the visit of such a person to the King of Spain or to the Vice Roy of Mexico. In none of the papers relating to the expeditions of Vizcaino, written



only a few years after 1592 (the time of de Fuca's supposed voyage), can be found any allusion to him; nor is any document bearing on his history in the archives of Sevilla or New Spain. It seems probable that Juan de Fuca never made a voyage in the service of the Vice Roy of Spain nor discovered a strait in the latitude indicated, and it may be considered as a mere accident that in the beginning of the 17th Century a strait in that region was described in a manner coinciding so nearly with the reality as was ascertained at a much later date."

One other name is worthy of notice in this connection. The celebrated Friar Andres de Urdañeta, the discoverer of the trade routes of the Pacific from east to west, had the honour of discovering the mythical passage thrust upon him. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, in "A Discourse to Prove a Passage by the North-West to Cathaia and the East Indies," states that "one Salvatierra, a gentleman of Victoria, in Spain, that came by chance out of the West Indies into Ireland in 1568," there assured him that Urdañeta had come from *Mar del Sur* (the Pacific) into Germany through the northern passage." Sir Humphrey adds that Urdañeta had shown Salvatierra "a sea-card, made by his own experience and travel in that voyage, wherein was plainly set down and described the north-west passage." Apparently, however, this was an amplification on the part of Salvatierra to induce Sir Humphrey to employ him in the exploration of the strait, the discovery of which he had naively attributed to Urdañeta. It is scarcely necessary to add that although there are many original papers by the Friar in the archives of the Council of the Indies there is nothing of the nature of Salvatierra's assertion. The nearest approach to anything of the sort is the Friar's report that some Frenchman had sailed through the strait from the Atlantic to the Pacific and thence to China.

As to the extravagant story of Martin Chake (or Chaque), a Portuguese, who is alleged to have sailed in 1555 from the Atlantic to a point on the Pacific coast north of California, in latitude 59°, and as to the pretensions of the Spaniard, Juan Fernandez de Ladrillero, who professed that he had certain knowledge of a passage north of New Spain, critical enquiry seems superfluous. These legends carry their own condemnation on their face: they are indeed of more interest to the psychologist than to the historian.



Travellers' tales have proverbially borne an unenviable repute, and the cynic might well speculate whether after all truth is not an acquired rather than an instinctive quality in human nature—a quality grudgingly conceded to the necessity of conforming with the opinions of society at large, and that when a man is freed from the shackles of convention, and disappears from the horizon of his fellows, the desire to excite wonder dominates over the desire to recount fact, and almost instinctively imagination, as if shocked by the nakedness of truth, proceeds to clothe and adorn her in all the fashions which taste and fancy may prescribe. And mankind, defined by Carlyle as “mostly fools,” prone to credulity, and to whom *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, greedily swallow any new and fancy viands which may be set before them to devour. It is only when an age of criticism is evolved from an age of superstition that fiction becomes indigestible, and fact is found to be the only useful food for the community at large.









## CHAPTER III

### SPANISH EXPLORATIONS

It has been shown that the first printed information concerning Northwestern America consisted of the imaginative efforts of the cartographers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and it has also been remarked that the first printed descriptions concerning that region were the narratives of men who apparently wished to test the credulity of the age; now the student must follow the navigators whose ships were the first actually to plough the North Pacific, and from whom were obtained the first authentic accounts of the seaboard of that immense territory which stretches from California to the Arctic Ocean, between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean.

At first there was little disposition displayed on the part of European governments to colonize America. Navigators were too intent upon finding a short route to India and China and so imbued were they with the theories advanced by the leading geographers of the day, who wrongly computed the circumference of the earth, that in the beginning the continents of North and South America were looked upon as nothing more than a barrier in the path of the explorer, whose sole ambition had been to reach the Orient. The search for a strait or open sea which might afford direct access to Japan and the East led men to brave cold and hunger in desolate Arctic regions, to suffer untold hardships, unknown dangers, sickness, and death. At last Balboa in 1513 sighted the Pacific Ocean from the Isthmus of Darien and gave a new impulse to the quest, which from that time was carried on with unabating zeal. Then Magellan, a gifted Portuguese, in the service of Spain, discovered the strait which bears his name. He reached the great ocean which separates America from Asia and was the first European to sail into the Pacific from the East.



A new direction was given American affairs at this juncture. Cortes, in the years 1519 and 1520, conquered Mexico and with an iron hand ruled its unfortunate peoples and wrested from them untold treasures which reached the coffers of the Spanish king, and a new era dawned for Spain.

From the subjugation of Mexico sprang many things, not the least of which was the exploration of the western coast of North America. Cortes pushed his conquest to the Pacific seaboard and with great energy prepared to explore the unknown regions of the North. The knowledge gained by Cortes and the discovery of the Philippine Islands by Magellan in 1520 kindled afresh the ambition of Spain to be supreme in the South Sea, and Philip II, in 1523, being informed of the efforts of the English to find a passage through or above the continent, ordered Cortes to search for the Pacific outlet of the Strait of Anian.

In pursuance of instructions given him by the King of Spain, Cortes ordered the construction of two caravels and two brigantines. The material for these, however, which had been transported six hundred miles, was destroyed by fire at Tehuantepec. But Cortes solaced himself with the reflection that the vessels would be ready to sail in 1525. In one of his despatches of that time we find the following memorable words:

"I attach such importance to these ships that I could not express it; for I consider it very certain that with them, if it please God, I shall be the means of your Imperial Majesty becoming in these regions Lord of more kingdoms and dominions than there is any knowledge of in our nation up to the present time. \* \* \* For I believe that when I do this your Highness will have nothing more to do in order to become monarch of the world."

Cortes' troubles, however, did not end here. The brigantines were burned just as they were ready to sail from Zacatula. To replace these craft, orders were given for the construction of three or four vessels at Tehuantepec (1527-28). While the vessels were in course of construction, the conqueror of Mexico, being obliged to visit Spain to counteract by the weight of his personal influence the effects of the envy and persecution which his successes had brought upon him, placed Pedro Nunez Maldonado in command of the new arsenal and shipyards. In the month of July, 1528, that officer sailed from the mouth of the River Zacatula towards the Northwest. He returned in course of six months, bringing with him, as usual,



imaginative accounts of the extent, richness, and fertility of the lands he had seen. This expedition marked the beginning of Spanish effort in the new field.

Cortes returned from Spain in 1530 and injected a new spirit into the affairs of the Pacific. At his own expense he brought with him "many noble adventurers, artizans, workmen and sailors, to the number of more than four hundred, for employment in expeditions he had planned." His vessels were refitted, and the *St. Miguel* and *St. Marcos*, under command of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, sailed from Tehuantepec on June 30, 1532, having in view the exploration of the islands of the Pacific off the coast of New Spain. According to his own accounts Mendoza reached the twenty-seventh degree of latitude. Here the crew mutinied and the *St. Miguel* was ordered to return with the papers of the expedition and the disaffected sailors, while the commander continued the voyage. The returning vessel, under the command of Juan de Mazuela, endeavoured to reach Acapulco, but she went ashore, and all on board, with the exception of three, were put to death by the natives of the country, after which the vessel was seized and plundered by Nuno de Guzman. As to the ship in which Mendoza continued his voyage, an account was received that she had been thrown on the coast far to the north and that all her crew had perished.

After the lapse of a year Cortes learned of the loss of the vessels, commanded by Hurtado de Mendoza, and he then despatched two ships from Tehuantepec in search of the missing expedition. These ships left the port on the 30th of September, 1533, but were soon after separated. Hernando Grijalva discovered a group of islands situated about fifty leagues from the coast, which he named Islands of St. Thomas. He remained until the following spring and returned to Acapulco, without adding much to geographical knowledge. Diego Becerra, commander of the other ship, was less fortunate, being murdered by the pilot, Fortuño Ximenes. Other labours of Cortes in the discovery and exploration of the Pacific side of North America will be mentioned in brief.

On the 3d of May, 1535, he entered the bay near the shore of Xalisco, where Becerra had been murdered, and in honour of the day the name of Santa Cruz was bestowed upon the place, of which possession was solemnly taken for the Spanish sovereign. It was the



southeast part of the great peninsula which projects from the American continent on the Pacific side in nearly the same direction and between nearly the same parallels of latitude as that of Florida on the Atlantic side. It soon afterward received the name of California. The bay called Santa Cruz by Cortes, says Greenhow, was probably the same later known as Port La Paz.

Returning to Mexico in the beginning of 1537, by reason of his having been removed as commandant of the country which he had added to the dominions of Spain, he thereupon recalled from Santa Cruz his lieutenant, Francisco de Ulloa, with the forces which had been left there, and in 1539 the last expedition made by water by Cortes was begun. It was commanded by Francisco de Ulloa, who sailed from Acapulco on the 8th of July, 1539, with three vessels, and took his course for California. One of the vessels was driven ashore near Culiacan. With the others Ulloa proceeded to the Bay of Santa Cruz, and in a few days departed to survey the coast towards the northeast. He examined both shores of the great gulf which separates California from the mainland on the east and ascertained the fact of the junction of the two territories near the thirty-second degree of latitude. Then rounding Cape San Lucas the expedition followed the oceanic coast of the Californian peninsula, at length reaching, under the twenty-eighth parallel, an island which Ulloa named the Isle of Cedars. Thence, on the 5th of April, the *Santa Agueda* set sail for Santiago, where she was seized by the officers of Don Antonio de Mendoza, who had succeeded Cortes as Viceroy. Of the fate of Ulloa there are contradictory accounts. Cortes in the meantime having come into conflict with the Viceroy and others in regard to continuing his explorations in a certain direction, returned in disgust to Spain, where he passed the remaining seven years of his life in vain efforts to recover his authority in Mexico or to obtain indemnification for his losses.

Other explorations were made overland by expeditionary parties sent out from Mexico. Friar Marcos tells of having discovered in Northwest Mexico beyond the thirty-fifth degree of latitude, extensive territories richly cultivated and abounding in gold, silver, and precious stones. In these countries were many towns and seven cities, one of which the friar called Cibola, containing twenty thousand large stone houses, some four storeys in height, adorned with jewels. Like the narratives of the discovery of channels through the northern conti-





ment, which a little later obtained credence amongst geographers, the stories emanating from the fertile imaginations of the Friar Marcos and his contemporaries as to Quivira, Cibola and Totontec were equally fictitious. However, such relations but reflected the glamour and romance which surround the early history of the territories lying to the northwest of Mexico.

Fernando de Alarcon, sailing from the port of Santiago on the 9th of May, 1540, reached the extremity of the Gulf of California in August following. There he discovered a great river which he named Rio de Nuestra Señora de Buena Guia (or River of Our Lady of Safe Conduct), probably the same now called Colorado.

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a Portuguese of high reputation as a navigator, sailed from Navidad, a small port in Xalisco, in June, 1542. By the middle of August he had advanced beyond the limits of the supposed discoveries of Ulloa. Ruy Lopez de Villalobos soon followed Cabrillo with another expedition, his objective being India, there to form establishments. Bartolome Ferrolo and Vasquez de Coronado also contributed their part in these early explorations as did Sebastian Vizcaino, a distinguished Spanish officer.

From the time of the death of Vizcaino, which occurred in 1608, until the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Spain, although it controlled the sea routes to the northwest, had made no effort to add to her discoveries in that direction. At last, however, Spain was induced to play a more active part in the North Pacific. Before 1778 British sailors had confined their operations to the South Pacific, but the Spaniards had been in constant dread of their appearance in the northern part of that ocean, more particularly because there had recently been a recrudescence of the stories of a navigable communication between the Pacific and the North Atlantic. Then the acquisition of Canada by Great Britain in 1763 rendered the discovery of the Northwest Passage of importance to that power, while Spain had at this time additional reasons for viewing with dissatisfaction any attempts of her rival to advance westward across the continent. Moreover, the Court of Madrid was perturbed by the reported activities of the Russians on the northernmost coasts of the Pacific. The fact that knowledge of the Russian explorations was vague and contradictory in nowise tended to lessen the apprehension of the Spanish cabinet. Russia had not made known the extent of her discoveries in the Northwest, conceiving it more politic to remain silent. Yet



enough had leaked out to make the Spanish Government fear for the safety of its Californian provinces. In this relation it should be borne in mind that the boundaries of the Californias at that time did not coincide with those of the California of today. The Californias of Spain it was claimed extended indefinitely northward, far beyond the point reached by the earliest navigators.

In view of these events and in order to give life to her claim to the sole sovereignty of the American islands and coast washed by the North Pacific, Spain in 1765 adopted a policy of expansion. The viceroy of Mexico, deCroix, and the visitador, Galvez, were instructed to enquire into the condition of that country and to put into effect measures of reforms. It was also intended by the Spanish Government that the vacant coasts and islands to the northward of California should be annexed and occupied.

At this time the sovereigns of France and Spain followed the example of Portugal in Europe and expelled the Jesuits from Mexico and the Peninsula of California. California was immediately proclaimed a province of Mexico and it was duly provided with a governmental establishment under Gaspar de Portala, who set out upon his famous expedition from La Paz to the newly created province in 1769. The missions in Lower California were handed over to the austere Dominicans who in turn were followed by the zealous Franciscan Fathers.

However important and interesting as the relations of Spain in California are to the student of British Columbian history, the newly awakened interest of Spain in the territories of northern latitudes is still more important and still more interesting. Spain had been slow to move, but once having embarked upon a policy of expansion it was not long before that policy bore fruit. As a precursor to the fitting out of exploratory expeditions for the North, a department of the Mexican Government was created about the year 1774, for the special purpose of promoting and fostering the work, under the title of the Marine Department of San Blas, so-called because the port of that name on the Mexican seaboard was selected as the base of operations. At this port arsenals, shipyards and warehouses were erected and thence the ships for the North were despatched.

The first Spanish keel to ply the North Pacific was the little corvette *Santiago*, which sailed from San Blas on the 25th of Jan-



uary, 1774, in command of Don Juan Perez, who was ordered by the Viceroy, to examine the coast as far north as the sixty-fifth degree of latitude. The pilot, or navigating officer, of the *Santiago*, was Estevan Martinez, who afterwards achieved a unique distinction in the service of his country. Perez was accompanied by the Franciscan Fathers, Crespi and Pena, to whom the world is indebted for accounts of the expedition. The two friars embarked at Monterey at the order of their superior, the celebrated Junipero Serra, then the Father Superior of the Franciscan mission at Monterey.

After several abortive efforts, the *Santiago* proceeded on her voyage, slowly making her way northward under heavy weather. Fogs, calms, and head winds delayed the progress of the vessel and it was not until the 18th of July that land was sighted, the distinctive features of which were an insulated cliff or peak, with a flat top, covered with snow. From the observations taken on board, this coast was sighted between latitudes fifty-three and fifty-four degrees, the first land seen by the Spaniards off the northwest coast being the western seaboard of the Queen Charlotte Islands. But no landing was made by the Spaniards. On the following day the coast was seen clearly seven or eight leagues away and an observation was taken by Perez, which marked the latitude, according to his calculations, as fifty-three degrees, fifty-eight minutes, north. In the afternoon the vessel advanced to within three leagues of the coast, but owing to the lateness of the hour it was decided not to land. On the following day, the 20th of July, a canoe approached the vessel and as it drew near the ship the occupants could be distinctly observed. The natives were singing one of their pagan songs and scattering feathers on the water as if to propitiate the strangers, so thought the Spaniards. At first they did not venture to come alongside of the vessel but at sight of handkerchiefs, beads, and biscuits offered by the Spanish sailors, their cupidity overcame their fear and they came close enough to the stern of the ship to take all that was thrown to them, but they would not go on board, although invited to do so. The graceful canoes which the Indians managed with such dexterity were apparently hewn out of a single tree trunk. These natives were of the Haida nation, perhaps the most warlike and advanced of all the tribes inhabiting the coast region. In their large canoes they swept down the coast, ruthlessly putting to death men, women, and children, sparing only those of



whom they wished to make slaves, and to this day their exploits are preserved in the traditions of the weaker tribes they harassed so terribly. In later years they were bold enough to threaten the infant colony and the Hudson's Bay posts at the southern extremity of Vancouver Island.

The insulated cliff first sighted by Perez, he named Santa Margarita, "because it was seen yesterday, which was the day of that glorious saint." So it is recorded by Father Crespi.

Father Pena in his diary says that that name was also bestowed upon a group of three small islands not far from the coast. Some forty or fifty miles north of this point was sighted a promontory covered with trees, which was named Santa Maria Magdalena. Beyond this cape the coast was flanked by high land covered with timber and trending east and west as far as it could be seen. An island near by was christened Santa Cristina and the snow-capped mountains of the interior were called San Cristobel.

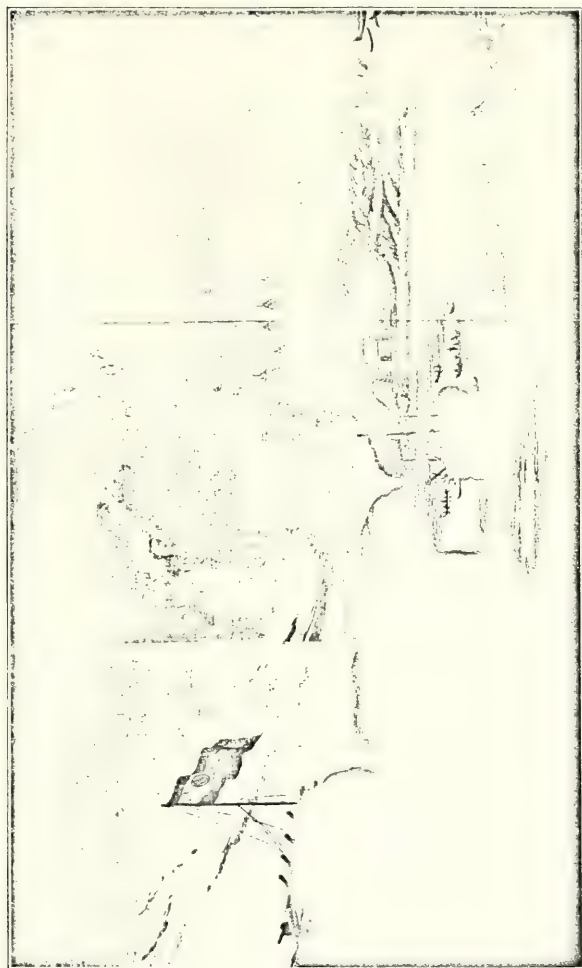
In seeking land in a latitude so far below that mentioned in his instructions, Perez was influenced by the fact that his water barrels needed replenishing. After a counsel of his officers it was decided to land at the first convenient spot, before proceeding to the sixty-fifth parallel, the point set as the northern limit of the voyage. Hence it was that the expedition made land near the fifty-fourth parallel, discovering the Queen Charlotte Islands. Neither Perez nor any of those on board the *Santiago* were aware of the fact that the land seen was not part of the continental shore.

Leaving Cape Santa Margarita, the *Santiago* sailed southward, but the weather was either so boisterous or so foggy that Perez only got occasional glimpses of the coast. Continuing her course, on the evening of Monday, the 18th of August, the *Santiago* sighted land about the forty-ninth parallel, according to an observation taken on board. With a light wind the vessel gradually drew near the strange coast and at 6 o'clock, being about a league from it, she came to anchor in twenty-five fathoms of water. From the deck of the vessel, the heavily wooded land could easily be seen.

It seemed that after nearly three centuries of intermittent effort the Spaniard was at last to set his seal upon the northwest coast, but the same powers and obdurate fate seemed ever to stand between the Spaniard and the attainment of his desire. The morning of Tuesday, the 19th, dawned calm and still, but all other quarters of







VISTA DE LO INTERIOR DE LA CALA DE LOS AMIGOS EN LA ENTRADA DE NUTKA



the compass were hidden by a dense fog which hung over land and water. Then occurred one of those sudden changes in the weather to which all coasts are at times subjected. The storm came up so quickly that there was not even time to hoist the long boat, which had been launched early in the morning, ready for the landing party. The captain immediately ordered the anchor to be weighed and the sails set, but the ship drifted shoreward so swiftly that it was found necessary to cut the cable and with great difficulty she doubled a reef to the southwest which ran far out into the sea. Having weathered the point, the vessel was hove to in order that the long boat might be taken on board. While this was being done, however, a heavy wind struck the boat and it was nearly lost, together with the sailors who were in it. After this fortunate escape sails were again loosed and the course set for the southeast, the wind and sea still increasing in violence. Thus the first Spanish vessel to reach the far Northwest ran from the only anchorage it had been possible to make in the whole course of the expedition.

The landfall of Perez, named by him San Lorenzo, has been the subject of much discussion, but it is not difficult to fix upon the anchorage of the *Santiago*. The American historian, Robert Greenhow is painfully in error when he asserts so positively that the Spanish commander discovered the sound, named a few years later "King George's," or "Nootka" Sound, by James Cook. The fact that the writer had access to Perez and Pena's journal, although apparently not to that of Crespi, which certainly is quite clear upon this point, only makes his blunt assertion more remarkable. Father Crespi, however, mentions San Lorenzo as lying between two points, of which the southeast was called San Estevan, in honour of the navigating officer, and that to the northwest, Santa Clara. If the *Santiago* had anchored in Nootka Sound she would have found a harbour safe in all weathers and there would have been no necessity to cut the cable in order to make an offing, no matter from what direction the wind might blow. There is little doubt then that the open roadstead where the vessel anchored a league from the shore is the bight or bay, of which the southern extremity is marked by the Point Estevan of the admiralty charts of today. Nothing in the journals mentioned can possibly be construed as evidence that Nootka Sound was ever seen, much less entered. It is certain then that Perez did not enter the historic channel named Nootka, by Cook, in spite



of Navarette's statement to the contrary, and Greenhow's even more explicit asseveration. If further evidence upon this point is desired it may be found in Robert Haswell's manuscript journal of the *Columbia-Rediviva* and sloop *Washington*, in which it is set forth that "Nootka Sound was discovered by Captain Cook March the 30, 1778, on his passag to the Northern hemisphere of this Ocean. But from the natives we lern their was a ship anchored at the enterence of the Sound forty months before Captain Cooks arrival. From the description they must have been Spaniards *but the natives say their boats weir not out duering their tarey.*" The italics mark the significant passage.

Making no further effort to explore the northern coast line, Perez turned his vessel southward and sailed for Monterey, reaching that point on Saturday, the 27th of August; and thus ended the first voyage of the Spaniards to the mysterious northern region. Beyond a cursory examination of one or two points and ascertaining the general trend of the coast line, little was accomplished by this expedition. Yet it is important historically from the fact that it marked the first effort of the Spaniards to learn something of a region of which for many years it had been in their power to acquire full knowledge; and although no mention of the Strait of Juan de Fuca is to be found in any of the journals, nor was it reported therein that an opening in the coast corresponding to that of the Greek pilot had been seen, Estevan Martinez at a crucial moment in the Nootka controversy conveniently remembered that he had noticed a large opening near the forty-eighth parallel, a fact which he strangely enough omitted to report at the time.

The voyage of Perez, although abortive, whetted the appetite of the Spaniards for northern exploration. Two expeditions followed in the wake of the *Santiago*, of which a brief account is here given. The Viceroy of Mexico, encouraged by the reports brought by Juan Perez, immediately ordered another expedition to be fitted out. The *Santiago* was again commissioned and placed in command of Naval Lieutenant Don Bruno Heceta, with whom Juan Perez sailed as quartermaster. The *Santiago's* consort was the little schooner *Felicidad*—renamed the *Sonora*—under Lieutenant Juan Francisco de Bodega y Quadra, whose name came to be inseparably associated with the most important incident of early Northwest history. A great deal might be said concerning the character of Bodega



y Quadra, but perhaps his own introduction to the journal of this expedition gives a better idea of the man than anything else that has been written of him. "Immediately," he writes, "on the arrival at the Department of San Blas of the six officers appointed by His Excellency the Viceroy, Friar D. Antonio Maria Bucareli, who were to command the frigate, packet, and schooner, I thought that on account of my seniority some position was due me, and being desirous of seeing myself included in the expedition upon which the frigate and schooner were going, their orders being to advance as far as possible towards the N. Pole from California, and to survey the coast; reflecting likewise that the greater the risk the more it should be sought for when the results tend to the sovereign's service, and that it is a quality of honour to desire to request from His Majesty a post where dangers must be despised for the sole object of seeking the means by which His royal ideas may be maintained or duly carried out; I could not restrain my ardour upon these reflections, and prayed that I might embark as second Captain in the schooner, a vessel in which I at once conjectured that even the lightest undertaking would be noteworthy, both on account of its small size, scanty crew, evident lack of necessaries, accumulation of risks, entire want of suitable qualities for such routes and lastly a vessel which only the ardour of a resolute mind would select on such an occasion of risk to life."

The vessels sailed from San Blas on the 16th of March, 1775, and proceeded slowly up the coast, in the teeth of contrary winds. It was the 19th of June before Heceta left Port Trinidad, off the Californian coast. Three weeks later, on July 11th, the Northwest coast was sighted in latitude given as forty-eight degrees and twenty-six minutes, from which point the Spaniards searched southward in vain for the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Spaniards anchored near Point Grenville, in latitude forty-seven degrees and twenty minutes. Here on that point, on the 14th of July, of the year 1775, so far as it is known, Europeans first set foot on the Northwest Coast. Bruno Heceta, the Padre, Pierre, the surgeon, Davalos, and Cristoval Revilla, the second pilot, landed with a few sailors and, after erecting a cross, with due ceremony took possession of the country in the name of the Sovereign King of Spain.

While the officers of the *Santiago* were thus engaged, the crew of the *Sonora* were in sore straits. A few men in the only boat had been sent ashore in quest of water. Scarcely had they landed,



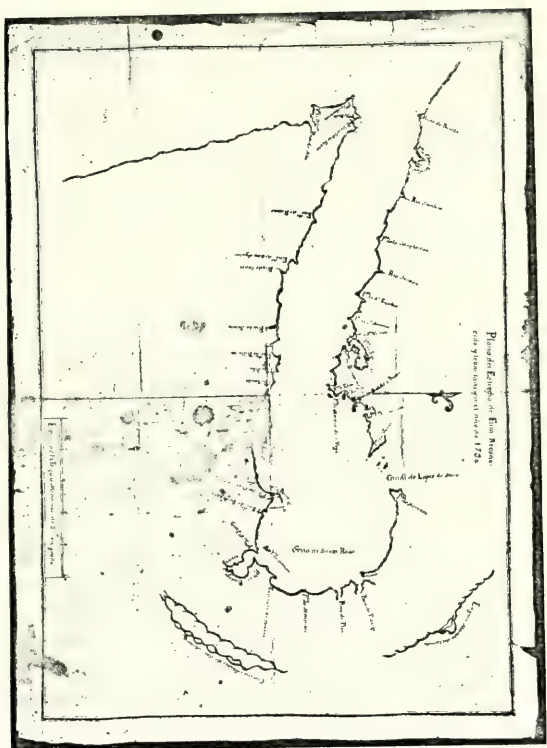


however, when the Indians to the number of three hundred rushed out of the woods and overwhelmed the small Spanish force. The tragedy was observed from the deck of the *Sonora*, but nothing could be done to aid the landing party, as the schooner could not get within range of the shore. Not a man escaped the murderous savages and Bodega y Quadra found his crew reduced to five men and one boy in health and four sailors too ill to perform their duties. The Indians, after the massacre on the shore, attacked the vessel from their canoes, but were repulsed with the loss of six men. Maurelle, the pilot, relates that there were only three on board able to handle a musket—the captain, his servant, and himself. Fortunately, the *Santiago* then arrived upon the scene of action and rescued her consort from an awkward position. In commemoration of the event the point was called Punta de Martires—Martyrs' Point; and the island a little to the northward, for the same reason therefore, was named Isla de Dolores—Island of Sorrows. The same island twelve years later was called Destruction Island by Captain Berkley of the *Imperial Eagle*, because some of his crew were massacred on the mainland opposite.

After this disaster the question of continuing the voyage was argued in council. Perez, Quadra, and Maurelle were all in favour of sailing northward, but Heceta was anxious to return to Monterey. The voyage was continued, but shortly after the vessels had got under way they were separated by a storm and Heceta seized the opportunity to sail for California, while Quadra nobly persevered in his determination to carry out at all hazards the instructions of the Viceroy to reach the sixty-fifth degree of latitude.

Heceta, after parting company with the *Sonora*, made land on the west coast of Vancouver Island near the fiftieth parallel and thence sailed southward, passing by the roadstead San Lorenzo. On his way southward, in a latitude reckoned as forty-six degrees and seventeen minutes, he noticed an opening in the coast, from which issued a strong current. He thought that he had discovered the mouth of some great river, or perhaps the strait reported to have been found by Juan de Fuca in 1592. In his journal it is recorded that he bestowed upon the bight then discovered the name of Enseñada de Asuncion, and the points north and south of it he called Cape San Roque and Cape Frondoso, respectively. In charts of the locality subsequently published in Mexico the opening is called





**FIRST SPANISH CHART OF STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA, 1790**  
From original manuscript in provincial archives



Enseñada de Heceta and Rio de San Roque. The journal of the explorer is more or less explicit and his description leaves little room for doubt that he had sighted the mouth of the lordly river called by Jonathan Carver "Oregon," subsequently known to the world as the Columbia, so named by Captain Gray after his vessel, *Columbia-Rediviva*, seventeen years later. Heceta arrived at Monterey on the 30th of August with two-thirds of his men disabled by scurvy.

In the meantime Quadra and Maurelle in their little vessel the *Sonora*—she was but twenty-seven feet in length, manned by a pilot, a boatswain, a mate, ten seamen, a cabin boy and a servant—made a desperate attempt to reach the sixty-fifth parallel, an effort as heroic as it was foolhardy in such an unseaworthy and ill-equipped craft. They sailed northwest without sighting land until the beautiful snow-capped mountain of San Jacinto (St. Hyacinth) appeared above the horizon, and somewhat further on, the ports Remedios and Guadelupe were visited and so named. The San Jacinto of the Spaniard is unquestionably the Mount Edgecomb of Captain Cook, while Port Remedios is not unlikely the Bay of Islands of the English navigator, and Port Guadelupe the Norfolk Sound of today.

While in the neighbourhood of the fiftieth parallel Bodega y Quadra determined to sail for San Blas, comforting himself with the reflection that although he had not succeeded in carrying out his instructions, yet he had reached a latitude beyond that effected by any other navigator.

On the way homeward the Archipelago San Lazarus of that famous romancer, Admiral La Fonte, and the imaginary strait leading therefrom far into the continent, were sought for in vain, but the *Sonora* discovered Bucareli Sound, a name that has remained on the map from that day to this. It is situated on the west side of the largest island of the Prince of Wales Archipelago, so named by Vancouver. Here again the Spaniards landed and took possession of the country with due formality. From Port Bucareli, Quadra sailed southward across Dixon's entrance, to which he gave the name of Entrada de Perez, and sighted Cape Santa Margarita (Cape North). Thence the schooner sailed down the coast and, on the 20th of November, 1775, reached San Blas, after an absence of eight months. The expedition, however, cannot be said to have been entirely successful, although in some respects it was important. Heceta, the commander, certainly did not distinguish himself. Quadra and Mau-



relle, on the other hand, as certainly proved themselves navigators of more than ordinary determination and courage. Though their vessel was miserably equipped and one-half of their crew laid low with that terrible distemper, the scurvy, they made a brave attempt to carry out their instructions. Their achievement indeed was a brilliant example of Spanish seamanship.

The third expedition of this period of renewed activity on the part of the Spaniards left San Blas under the command of Ignacio Arteaga, who sailed in the *Princesa* accompanied by Bodega y Quadra, with the faithful Maurelle as second officer, in the *Favorita*. Arteaga sailed on the 17th of February, 1779, and after a voyage of four months made Port Bucareli, where he remained several weeks surveying the bay, trading with the natives and refitting his vessels. Leaving this harbour, Arteaga and Quadra made the highest point yet reached by the Spaniards, sighting the magnificent mountain of St. Elias, so named by Bering in 1741.

While searching for a passage which might lead into the Arctic Sea they entered a large bay containing many islands, which they called Isla de la Magdalena. Port Santiago was also discovered and named. At this point, as their provisions were failing and the men suffering from the prevailing malady, it was decided to return to Mexico. Accordingly a course was set for the south, and on the 15th of October, the expedition entered the Golden Gate of San Francisco, and on the 21st of November it arrived at San Blas, with little, if anything, to its credit. In short, the voyage was barren of results, yet strange to relate the officers engaged in it were all promoted as if they had rendered excellent service.

So far, the Spanish voyages to the Northwest had done little more than barely discover the coast which is now the Pacific seaboard of Canada. That deeply indented and island-fringed shore was still, even as it has been from time immemorial, a land of mystery, associated in the minds of geographers and navigators with the vaunted exploits of travellers otherwise unknown to fame. Even the romantic literature of that time reflects the curiosity of the age with regard to the strange land which Verendrye had failed to penetrate from the east, even as Bodega y Quadra had failed to explore it from the west. Here Dean Swift placed his fabled land of Brobdingnag, and long before Lemuel Gulliver related the story of his strange adventures, Pantagruel, Rabelais' eccentric hero, had found his way to





California—at least it has been surmised that the French abbé had that country in mind when he recounted Pantagruel's travels. In fact, the world was curiously concerned about it all, the more especially so, perhaps, because the reports of the Spanish explorations that escaped from, or were given to the world by, the secretive Spanish ministry were too vague to do more than give rein to conjecture.

Three hundred years had elapsed since the Spaniard found his way across Mexico to the shores of Balboa's great South Sea, christened "The Pacific" by Magellan, the Portuguese, but in all that time the Northwest coast had not been charted or surveyed. Such was the position of affairs in 1779 when war broke out between Great Britain and Spain, and for the time being the latter country was forced to abandon her enterprise in the North Pacific. When Spain was again prepared to pursue an active policy she found that Captain James Cook, and the fur traders who followed him, had done much to make known the true configuration of the Northwest coast, although the gaps were not closed, or the continental shore line fully examined, until Captain George Vancouver's survey of 1792 to 1794.





MAP OF NORTH AMERICA, CIRCA, 1623



## CHAPTER IV

### RUSSIAN EXPLORATIONS

After the voyage of Vizcaino in 1603 no determined effort was made by Spain to chart the northern way. Indeed, in a few years so utterly forgotten were the explorations of the time of Cortes and Mendoza that the Gulf of California was supposed to extend far northward, where it connected again with the ocean. California, in fact, was looked upon not as part of the continent, but as a large island of unknown length and breadth. It is not unlikely that this erroneous idea originated with the Dutch free-booters, who in the beginning of the seventeenth century formed a piratical settlement on the coast of Lower California. They reported, that a vessel had once sailed northward through the Sea of Cortes into the Pacific, thus establishing the fact that California was an island. The story was believed, and Samuel Purchas, in the third volume of "His Pilgrimes," printed a map of North America, representing California as an island, and the Sea of Cortes, the Gulf of California, as a broad channel of enormous length. The views of Purchas were received with favour and generally adopted, and the Spaniards, forgetting the maps then lying in their own archives, apparently shared in the belief, and about the year 1670 the name "California" was on some charts changed to "Las Islas Carolinas," intimating that it was nothing more nor less than a large cluster of islands.

The unsuccessful attempts made in this period by the Spaniards with regard to discovery and development are symbolical of the state of decrepitude into which the one-time mighty Spanish monarchy had fallen. This decadence naturally affected Mexico, even as it did the other colonial possessions of the Empire. Commonplace and pretentious explorers, quixotically styled "admirals," were employed in the maritime service of Spain. Small wonder is it, then, that their accomplishments were insignificant in comparison with the daring



work of such great captains and intrepid explorers as Ulloa, Cabrillo and Vizcaino.

The Reverend Father Venegas avers that one reason why these expeditions to the northward did not succeed was that no care was taken of former reports, surveys, maps or plans. "They were not carefully preserved and made known by print," he observes.

California, thus practically abandoned by the Spanish Government, however, still held the attention of the Jesuits, then powerful and active in both divisions of the western hemisphere. They had established missions on the eastern side of the Gulf of California and throughout the Pacific Provinces of Mexico. Versatile and daring, these men furnished not only missionaries to convert and teach the heathen, but also journalists, cosmographers and historians to nearly all of the Spanish expeditions from earliest times down to the year 1767. For the history of the Jesuits in California one must turn to the "Noticia de la California," by the Jesuit Miguel Venegas, which was published in Madrid in 1757. Of the subsequent history of the Jesuits from 1752 to 1767, when they were expelled from the country, much has been written, but that story is beyond the scope of this work.

While the Jesuits, by their settlements in and explorations of the Peninsula of California, were laying the foundation for further progress towards the Northwest, the Russians from the opposite direction were advancing towards the same region. Indeed, it was Muscovite enterprise that moved the Spanish Government to make a final effort to establish its sovereignty at least as far northward as the fifty-fourth parallel of latitude. In the great work of Arctic exploration which was essentially the occupation of the navigators of the last two centuries, it was first Russia and later England that took the lead. Until comparatively recent times it was to these two nations that the historian and the geographer were principally indebted for a knowledge of Arctic regions. Peter Lauridsen, the biographer of Vitus Bering, remarks that, "The English expeditions were undertaken with better support and under circumstances better designed to attract public attention. They have, moreover, been excellently described and are consequently well known. But in the greatness of the tasks undertaken, in the perseverance of their leaders, in difficulties, dangers and tragic fates, the Russian explorations stand worthily at their side. The geographic positions of the Russians, their dispersion throughout the coldest regions of the earth, their frugal habits, remarkable





power of foresight, and their adventurous spirit, make them especially fitted for Arctic explorations. Hence during the first half of the eighteenth century they accomplished for Asia what the English not until a hundred years later succeeded in doing for the other side of the earth—namely, the charting of the Polar coasts.”

It was the Russians who introduced the system of sledging into the service of Arctic expeditions, and in passing it may be observed that it is only through the systematic development of such means that modern explorers have been able to achieve their most signal triumphs in desolate northern latitudes. The history of Russian exertions in that bleak field is adorned with a series of proud names, but perhaps the greatest of them all is that of Vitus Bering, the Dane. It redounds to the honour of Denmark, as Peter Lauridsen, a member of the Council of the Royal Danish Geographical Society, observes, “that the most brilliant chapter in the history of Russian explorations is due to the initiative and indefatigable energy of Vitus Bering.” In the service of the half-civilized, if not wholly barbaric Peter the Great, he doubled the northeastern peninsula of Asia, and on his return to Russia prepared a plan for explorations which were to reach from the Arctic Sea to Japan.

It was peculiarly fitting that the equipment of Bering's first expedition to the northeast should be one of the last administrative acts of Peter the Great. From his death bed he set in motion forces which in the years that followed were to conquer a new world for human knowledge. It was not until his rugged but mighty spirit was about to depart this world that that work was begun. The death of the great Czar witnessed the birth of a force which was destined to be memorably effective for half a century; and the results then achieved still excite admiration.

It is pertinent to inquire what led Peter to undertake this work. That question is answered by Lauridsen, who avers that he was incited to such a Herculean task “by a desire for booty, by a keen, somewhat barbaric, curiosity, and by a just desire to know the natural boundaries of his dominion. He was no doubt less influenced by the flattery of the French Academy and other institutions than is generally supposed.” Whatever may have been the motives which prompted his activities, his great enterprise certainly brought Russia into the front rank of those nations engaged in geographical exploration. Just before his death he planned no less than three great enter-



prises—the establishment of a mart at the mouth of the River Kur for the Oriental trade, the creation of maritime trade with India, and a scientific expedition to settle once and for all the boundary between Asia and America.

With the first two projects, which, however, did not survive the Czar, this work is not concerned; but Bering tenaciously held to his plan and in the end gave up his life in the accomplishment of his task.

Peter the Great was not a monarch to heed obstacles or to weigh the possibilities of the success of any of his enterprises. His plans, therefore, were always on a grand scale, if the means for carrying them out were often entirely inadequate. His imperious and laconic instructions left no room for doubt as to their intent, nor as to the results of his orders. It is said that on one occasion he addressed his commander-in-chief in Astrakhan, as follows: "When fifteen boats arrive from Kazan, you will sail them to Baku and sack the town." His instructions to his Danish officer were just as terse and characteristic. It seems that they were written in December, 1724, five weeks before his death, and they are substantially as follows: "I.—At Kamchatka or somewhere else, two decked boats ought to be built. II.—With these you are to sail northward along the coast, and as the end of the coast is not known, this land is undoubtedly America. III.—For this reason you are to inquire where the American coast begins and go to some European colony, and when European ships are seen you are to ask what the coast is called, note it down, make a landing, obtain reliable information, and then, after having charted the coast, return." After the navigators of the nations of Western Europe had for two centuries wearied themselves with the search for a northern passage and made strenuous efforts to navigate the Strait of Anian, Russia sought to solve the problem, perhaps in a more practical manner, by first of all looking for the outlet of the strait and starting out on a voyage round the northern part of the Old World. Yet, perhaps some adventurous Russian sailor, unknown and unhonoured, had already solved this problem, because it would seem that the "*Typus Orbis Terrarum*" of Ortelius, printed in 1585, and the even earlier map of Johann Martinez of 1562 or 1565, clearly show the extensive passage long since named in honour of the intrepid explorer, a brief account of whose exploits are now to be related. Or perhaps rumours of the proximity of another continental shore near the northeastern corner of Asia may have drifted across Siberia. From



such a source the early geographers may have obtained an approximately correct idea of the relative positions of the two great continents.

Bering's first expedition was to settle the great question of that age—Were Asia and America connected, or were they separate?—Were there northwest and northeast passages?

If the above mentioned ukase is indicative of anything at all, it would seem to show that the Czar's inquisitive mind was dwelling on the possibility of establishing a line of communication to the Spanish colonies in central America.

A writer of repute has observed that "In the history of discoveries the spirit of human enterprise has sought its way through an incalculable number of mirages. These have aroused the imagination, caused agitations, debates and discussion, but usually have veiled an earlier period's knowledge of the question. There are many re-discovered countries on our globe."

So it may be in this case. The northwestern part of America almost wholly disappeared from the cartography of the seventeenth century. Finally the geographic explorations of the eighteenth century, provoked by political events, a zeal for knowledge and the greed of European nations, led to the settlement of long mooted questions. Russia, towards the end of the seventeenth century, conquered the desolate tracts of Siberia and even penetrated the country of the warlike Chukchees. Deschneff's palisaded fort on the Anadyr River maintained Russian authority in extreme northeast Kamchatka in the early years of the eighteenth century, and thence came to Russia the first vague rumours concerning the Pacific side of the continent of America. It was the genius of the Czar Peter that welded these groping efforts into something like order. Ivan Kosyrefski, the son of a Polish officer in Russian captivity, was ordered to explore the peninsula to its southern extremity, and some of the Kurile Islands. In 1719 he despatched Yevrinoff and Lushin to ascertain whether Asia and America were connected, but secretly he instructed them to search the Kurile Islands instead for precious minerals. These and various other expeditions collected a vast mass of information touching the geography of eastern Asia, the sea of Okhotsk, Kamchatka, and the Kuriles. Shipwrecked Japanese had also given valuable information respecting their country.

The two expeditions of Vitus Bering are possibly unique in the history of far northern explorations. Lauridsen, upon whose book



the following narrative is largely based, says that the real starting point was far beyond the farthest verge of civilization, where as yet only the daring hunter and yassak-collector had preceded him. At that time Kamchatka was as wild and unknown a region as the North and South Poles are today. One hundred and thirty degrees of the earth's most inhospitable tracts—mountains, steppes, impenetrable forests, morasses and fields of trackless snow, lay between St. Petersburg and the Kamchatkan Peninsula, whither Bering was to lead, not a small expedition, such as Sir Alexander Mackenzie led across the American continent, but an enormous provision train which was also burdened with material for ship-building. On that memorable journey, which seems to have almost entirely escaped the notice of succeeding generations, flat-bottomed river boats or scows had to be built by the score, rough roadways constructed through morasses, or cut through forests. Or again it would be necessary to resort to horses, or sledges drawn by dogs. Through the dreary and desolate wastes of the Yakuts and Tunguses lay the course of this wonderful expedition. As a matter of fact, Bering's undertaking loses nothing in comparison with the explorations of Franklin, Mackenzie, Nansen, Peary, Amundsen, Scott, Shackleton, and many others who have traversed the Arctic regions. In some respects perhaps their expeditions, with the lightest of equipments, are not to be compared with Bering's effort.

In February and January, 1725, the expedition left St. Petersburg. The officers were the two Danes, Vitus Bering, Commander-in-Chief, Martin Spangberg, Lieutenant and second in Command, Lieutenant Alexei Chirikoff and Second Lieutenant Peter Chaplin; the cartographers, Lushin and Patiloff, Dr. Niemann and the Reverend Ilarion, and the mates, Richard Engel and George Morison. The sufferings and hardships endured on that hazardous journey were indeed terrific, but finally, on March 11, 1728, Bering reached his destination at the lower Kamchatkan Ostrog (or stockaded post), where he found a church and forty huts scattered along the banks of the river. Here lived a handful of Cossacks who, in that distant and barbarous land maintained the sovereignty of the Czar of all the Russias. The deprivations and isolation of that barren region had had their effect upon the men and they were scarcely more civilized than the natives whom they ruled and knouted.





Here, with no other resources than those he had brought with him or was able to find in the country, Bering built the *Gabriel*, a vessel staunch enough to withstand the buffetings of heavy gales. It is related that the timber for this vessel was hauled to the shipyards by dogs; that the tar was manufactured by the sailors; while the riggings, cable and anchors had been dragged two thousand miles through the Siberian wilderness. As for the sailor's provisions—"Fish oil was his butter and dried fish his beef and pork"; salt he was obliged to get from the sea, and he distilled spirits from sweet straw. With this meagre supply and with his crude vessel Bering started upon a voyage of discovery along an unknown coast and upon an unknown sea. "It is certain," says Dr. Campbell, "that no person better fitted for this undertaking could have been found; no difficulty, no danger, daunted him. With untiring industry and almost incredible patience he overcame those defects which to any one else would have seemed insurmountable."

On July 9, 1728, the *Gabriel* drifted down the river and the 13th of that month the sails were hoisted and the prow of the little vessel pointed towards the north.

Bering's course was generally along the coast and usually within sight of land. He proceeded to a point near  $67^{\circ} 18'$  north latitude, and  $193^{\circ} 7'$  east of Greenwich, thus establishing the fact that the continents of Asia and America were separated by a sea, the limits of which, however, he failed to determine. On account of cloudy weather he did not even catch a glimpse of the American continent. According to Du Halde, "This was Captain Bering's most northerly point. He thought that he had accomplished his task and obeyed orders, especially as he could no longer see the coast extending toward the north in the same way." Fearing that if he should go farther he might not be able to return to Kamchatka before the end of the summer, he determined to return to his base. On the 31st of August, after a severe buffeting by a gale in which the mainsail and foresail were rent and the anchor lost, the intrepid explorer reached the mouth of the Kamchatka on September 22, 1728. From the knowledge he had gained of his own expedition and from that he had gleaned from Deschneff's earlier expedition, and from accounts he had gathered from the natives of the country, Bering was convinced that he had sailed around the northeastern corner of Asia, and that his voyage had demonstrated that the two great continents were not



connected. From St. Petersburg it was announced that "Bering has ascertained that there really does exist a northeast passage and that from the Lena River it is possible, provided one is not prevented by polar ice, to sail to Kamchatka and thence to Japan, China and the East Indies." It may be taken for granted that it was this conviction that led him to undertake his next great enterprise, the navigating and charting of the Northeast Passage from the Obi River to Japan.

It is unfortunate that the explorer was prevented from discovering the adjacent American continent. At the narrowest part of it, Bering's Strait is scarcely forty miles wide, and under favourable climatic conditions it is possible to see simultaneously the coast lines of both continents. Captain James Cook was more fortunate than the great Dane, for as he approached the strait the rays of the sun dispersed the mists and fogs and at one glance both continents were seen, so Lauridsen affirms. With Bering, as his journal explains, during the whole time that he was in the strait the horizon was hidden by dark clouds.

In 1729 Bering once more started out upon a voyage of exploration, and although he actually reached the vicinity of the island upon which later he ended his days, the locality was obscured from his sight by heavy fogs. The remainder of the summer the navigator employed in more accurately charting the peninsula and the northern Kurile Islands. He also explored the channel between them and the new and easier route to Kamchatka. In 1730 Bering returned to Russia.

Now if his work had amounted to no more than his accomplishments of the years 1728 and 1729, Bering would still have been entitled to the just admiration of succeeding generations of navigators. "From the perusal of his ship's journal," says one who could speak with authority, "one becomes convinced that our famous Bering was an extraordinarily able and skilful officer; and if we consider his defective instruments, his great hardships and the obstacles that had to be overcome, his observations and the great accuracy of his journal deserve the highest praise. He was a man who did Russia honour." His knowledge of and extensive travels in northeastern Asia, his scientific qualifications, his ability to make careful and accurate observations, and his acquaintance with the works of earlier and contemporary explorers, put him in a position to form a more correct



idea of that part of the earth than any other living man. No man, however, is a prophet in his own country, and Bering was obliged to submit to the indignity of having his work questioned and even contradicted by the authorities of St. Petersburg. In Ivan Kirilovich Kiriloff, indeed, he found a friend in need, but other members of the Academy of Sciences refused to weigh his evidence, sound as it was.

As important and as memorable as Vitus Bering's first expedition was in the annals of discovery, it was neither so important nor so memorable as that second expedition which resulted in the discovery of the far northwestern region of America, afterward named Alaska. Upon his return to Russia, imbued with a desire to explore further the regions he had recently visited, and to sail the unknown sea to the eastward, he began to make plans for future operations. Two months had barely elapsed after his return before he presented two plans to the Russian Admiralty. In the first he submitted a series of suggestions for the better administration of Eastern Siberia, while in the second he outlined his Great Northern Expedition, perhaps one of the greatest geographical enterprises the world has ever known. This document clearly demonstrates the fact that the plan originated with Bering—a fact which is important because it has since been stated that the idea was not his own. He proposed to explore and chart the western coast of America and to establish commercial relations with that country, and also to visit Japan for the same purpose, as well as to chart by land and sea the Arctic coast of Siberia. It was his object to fill the vacant spaces on his chart of the region between the known west and the known east, since doubts had been thrown upon his first achievement. He knew that proof of the separation of the two continents would be forthcoming if the American coast were charted.

The political situation favoured Bering's plans. Anna Ivanovna, who succeeded Catharine, had ascended the throne in 1730, and at her court foreigners and the reform party of Peter the Great again became influential. The Empress was ambitious and desired to shine in Europe as the ruler of a great empire—"Europe was to be awed by Russian greatness and Russia by European wisdom." Anna deemed that one of the surest ways to attain the desired end was through the equipment of scientific expeditions. She had at her disposal an Academy of Science, a fleet, and the resources of a mighty empire. It was therefore the desire of the Court to make the enter-



prise as large and sensational as possible. Bering's proposals, it is true, served as a basis for the plans of the Empress, but after the lapse of two years these simple proposals, through the intervention of the Senate, the Academy, and the Admiralty, assumed such vast proportions that it may well be conceived that the originator had difficulty in recognizing them. In April, 1732, the Empress charged the Senate to take the necessary steps to ensure the execution of the scheme.

At this time the Senate was presided over by Ivan Kirilloff, who had been one of the most enthusiastic admirers of Peter the Great. He acted with despatch. On May 2nd, the Senate promulgated two ukases, in which were declared the objects of the expedition, and the necessary means to that end indicated. It was at this point in the preparations that the governing bodies burdened the chief of the expedition with tasks very far removed from his original plans. He was directed to not only explore the islands of the North Pacific and to reach the Spanish possessions in America, but to also provide for the development of Siberia. It is peculiar that an explorer charged with a certain and definite mission—that of reaching and charting northwest America—should be directed to supply Okhotsk with inhabitants, to introduce cattle on the Pacific Coast, to found schools and to establish a dock-yard and iron works in that out-of-the-way corner of the world. But even this was only the beginning of a still larger program. In its passage through the Admiralty and the Academy, his commission assumed startling dimensions. The Admiralty on the one hand desired the charting of Asia from Archangel to Japan; while the Academy could not be satisfied with anything less than a scientific exploration of all northern Asia. Thus decree after decree followed in rapid succession. Late in December, 1732, the Senate issued a ukase, the sixteen paragraphs of which outlined more or less minutely the explorations to be undertaken by the expedition.

To sum up—Bering, now a Commodore in the Russian Navy, with Chirikoff as his Lieutenant, was placed in command of a triple expedition, which was to cover northwestern America, Japan and the Arctic regions. Even such an expedition as this, it would appear, exceeded all reasonable demands, and not for several generations later did Cook, La Perouse, and Vancouver succeed in accomplishing what the Russian Senate expected Bering to do in a few short years.





The Admiralty desired accurate charts; and the Academy a scientific exploration of Siberia and Kamchatka. Not only "an account of these regions based on astronomical determinations and geodetic surveys, on minute descriptions and artistically executed landscape pictures, on barometric, thermometric and aerometric observations, as well as investigations in all the branches of natural history," was demanded but also "a detailed preparation of the ethnography, colonization and history of the country together with a multitude of special investigations in widely different directions." The Senate had thrust the whole organization and the conduct of this business upon the shoulders of one man. Bering was made chief of all the enterprises east of the Ural Mountains. He was to furnish ships, provisions and transportation. It is small wonder therefore that an expedition planned upon such loose principles, and to serve such diversified interests resulted in almost complete failure.

Bearing in mind what Siberia was at that time and the stupendous obstacles it offered to the transportation of such an expedition as this, it seems almost ridiculous in these later days to read that the academical branch of the undertaking, in charge of the astronomer La Croyere, the physicist Gmelin (the elder) and the historian Müller, was luxuriously equipped. "Two landscape painters, one surgeon, one interpreter, one instrument maker, five surveyors, six scientific assistants and fourteen bodyguards," made up the retinue of the men of science. The expedition began to move from St. Petersburg in detachments in the early months of 1733. It consisted in all of five hundred and seventy men, in which total, however, the thirty or forty academists and their attendants are not included. More than half of the officers, many of the non-commissioned officers, and all of the physicians were foreigners,—a fact which throws an interesting sidelight on the social condition of the Russia of that period. The Senate, by promise of large increase of salary and of promotion, if the expedition proved successful, sought to inspire the officers with zeal. But the rank and file were to be forced to do their duty "by threat of cruel punishments and a continued stay in Siberia." It has been asserted that Bering's expedition was looked upon in St. Petersburg as a mild sort of banishment.

In time Bering reached the Kamchatkan Peninsula where he founded the seaport of Petropavlovsk at the mouth of Kamchatka River in 1740, seven years after his departure from St. Petersburg.



The two little vessels, *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, which had been built at Okhotsk, sailed in September, 1740, for Petropavlovsk, where they were frugally outfitted for a summer's cruise. Neither their stores nor rigging were complete or even adequate, but this did not deter the brave Dane from embarking upon his hazardous undertaking. Nor was this all. The incessant toil and heavy hardships, the necessary accompaniment of such a vast enterprise, had already undermined the commander's health. When Bering sailed from Kamchatka he was physically a wreck. The *St. Peter* was commanded by Vitus Bering and the *St. Paul* by Alexei Chirikoff. With Bering sailed the naturalist Georg Wilhelm Steller, whose history of the expedition may be counted among the most interesting of geographic memoirs. The French geographer, Joseph Nicholas Delisle de la Croyere, accompanied Chirikoff.

On the 4th of June, 1741, the vessels started on their memorable voyage, but on the 20th were separated in a storm and fog and after ineffectual attempts on the part of the *St. Peter* to get in touch with the *St. Paul*, the search was abandoned and the *St. Peter* continued the voyage, taking a course between north and east toward the western continent. Bering now and from this time on was confined to his cabin, suffering from incipient scurvy which crushed his powers of resistance. At noon on the 16th day of July, 1741, land was seen to the northward, and on the 20th the *St. Peter* cast anchor off an island, which Bering named St. Elias. The country is described by Steller as being high, rugged and covered with snow, and the coast indented and girt with inhospitable rocks; behind, in splendour, a snow-capped mountain peak towered so far into the clouds that it could be seen at a distance of seventy miles. The mountain thus described may have been the great volcanic cone of St. Elias, some eighteen thousand feet in height. The vessel remained here a few days and then proceeded in a northwesterly direction for the purpose of examining the continental shore and the adjacent islands. Steller, ambitious to give a detailed account of the fauna and flora of the locality, was greatly perturbed by this decision and in his diary gives full vent to his ill-humour. Bering's object was to chart the coast, while Steller wished to pursue his scientific investigations, hence the difference of opinion.

It is not easy to determine exactly the landfall of Bering. The explorer's own journal gives the latitude as 59° 40' and the longi-



tude as  $48^{\circ} 50'$  east of Avatcha, but these calculations contain an error of some eight degrees. Cook himself was uncertain on this point and cautiously writes that Müller's report of the voyage is "so very much abridged, and the chart so extremely inaccurate, that it is hardly possible, either by the one or by the other, or comparing both together, to find out any one place which that navigator either saw or touched at. Were I to form a judgment of Bering's proceedings on this coast, I should suppose, that he fell in with the continent near Mount Fairweather. But I am by no means certain, that the bay to which I have given his name, is the place where he anchored. Nor do I know, that what I called Mount St. Elias, is the same conspicuous mountain to which he gave that name. And as to his Cape St. Elias, I am entirely at a loss to pronounce where it lies." For a full discussion of this point one must turn to Professor Davidson's able monograph entitled "Tracks and Landfalls of Bering and Chirikoff."

For several weeks the *St. Peter* lay off and on the coast, and while in the region of the Kadiak Island, Bering named a high projecting cape St. Hermogenes, in honour of the patron saint of the day on which it was sighted. During the succeeding weeks the *St. Peter* was buffeted by wind and wave on the turbulent waters of the Aleutian Archipelago. On August 30th, the *St. Peter* anchored off the Shumagin group of barren and rocky islands near the coast of Alaska. Bering was so ill that he could not stand, and one-third of the crew was stricken with scurvy. To refresh the sick they were carried ashore, where they lay huddled together, sad and sorrowful. Confusion, uncertainty and despair marked these dark days. The officers quarrelled and bandied hot words, and the unfortunate stay on the Shumagin Islands was marked with death and disaster.

Leaving the Shumagin Islands, the *St. Peter* sailed southward to pick up her course for Kamchatka. At times the officers expressed a wish to return to America, to seek a harbour of refuge for the winter, but Bering would not sanction the project. Finally, on November 4th, land was sighted in the supposed latitude of  $53^{\circ} 30'$ . This brought joy and hope to all on board of the *St. Peter*. It was presumed the vessel was off the coast of Kamchatka, but instead of this, the land in view was but an island off the coast of that peninsula since named the Commander, or Bering Islands.



Certain of the officers resolved to make a landing, greatly against the wishes of their commander. He was helpless, however, as he was practically at death's door with scurvy. The *St. Peter* had miraculously drifted into a safe harbour off Bering Island of the Commander group of islands. On landing, the place was found to be teeming with animal life never before disturbed by predatory human beings. The sea-lion and fur-seal were found in great numbers, while the ponderous sea-cow fed upon the rich algae of the seashore. Steller relates that the animals of the coast were entirely new and strange even to him, and showed no fear whatever. The sea-otters, they first supposed to be bears or gluttons. Arctic foxes flocked about them in such numbers that they could strike down three or four score of them in a couple of hours. The most valuable fur-bearing animals stared at them curiously, and along the coast Steller saw with wonderment "whole herds of sea-cows, grazing on the luxuriant algae of the strand." Not only he had never seen this animal before, but even his Kamchatkan cossack did not know it.

Steller wisely began to make preparations for the winter and in the sand bank near the stream he and such of his companions as could stand the work dug a pit and roofed it over with driftwood and clothing. The frozen bodies of the foxes they had killed were piled against the sides to prevent the arctic wind finding its way through the cracks and crevices. The sick were gradually taken ashore and placed under canvas on the beach. Some died as they were carried on deck, and others in the boats as they were being taken on shore. On every side lay the sick and the dying. "Some complained of cold, others of hunger and thirst, and the majority of them were so afflicted with scurvy that their gums, like a dark brown sponge, grew over and entirely covered their teeth. The dead became the prey of the foxes, of which countless numbers gathered about the encampment ready to devour the dead or attack the dying." So it is pathetically recorded by Steller.

By December the whole crew was lodged in roofed pits. The provisions were divided among the messes, so that every man daily received a pound of flour and some groats until the supply was exhausted. Naturally the chase was depended upon for sustenance almost exclusively. In this way the men succeeded in struggling through the rigorous winter, but in spite of all Steller's precautions, death made sad havoc amongst them. In the council held on board





the *St. Peter* when land was sighted, the spirit of the great but unhappy commander had flared up and for the hour some of his old force and vigour returned to him, but it was only the last effort of a dying man. He had exerted all his remaining powers to prevent the landing from the *St. Peter* and that exertion had knelled his doom.

Before leaving Okhotsk, Bering had contracted a malignant ague which had undermined his constitution and in this last expedition scurvy had claimed him as a victim. He was sixty years old and heavily built. He was worn out with suffering and anxiety; he was broken in health and in spirit; yet he would no doubt have recovered if he had obtained proper nourishment and warmth. In a sand pit on Bering Island there could be no hope for him. Blubber was the only medicine at hand and for this he had an unconquerable loathing. Nor were the frightful sufferings of his men, his disappointment at the fate of the great northern expedition, calculated to relieve his mind or to restore health to his body. From hunger, cold and grief he slowly pined away. An old record has preserved an account of his death. He was, as it were, buried alive. The sand from the sides of the pit where he lay kept continually rolling down over his feet. At first it was removed, but towards the end he asked that it might remain where it had fallen, as it furnished him with a little of the warmth he so sorely needed. Soon half of his body was under the sand, which in life had served him as a coverlet, and in death became his winding sheet. He died on the 8th of December (old style), 1741, two hours before the bleak day dawned. So passed the great Dane and so ended the long drawn-out tragedy of the great northern expedition.

With Bering died that dynamic force which had driven forward persistently and relentlessly two great geographic expeditions. Through long, weary years he struggled in Siberia "to combine and execute plans and purposes, which only under the greatest difficulties could be combined and executed." With an indomitable will and persistent activity he endeavoured to "bridge the chasm between means and measures, between ability to do and will to do—a condition typical of the Russian society at that time." That he surmounted the difficulties presented by a distant and unsympathetic government, the voice of the traducer, a severe climate, ill-chosen associates and an inexperienced force of men, speaks volumes for his pertinacity and courage. From St. Petersburg across



Siberian wastes; from Kamchatka through an unknown sea to the inhospitable coast of Alaska; from Alaska to the mist-enshrouded Commander Islands, where the closing scene of this great tragedy was enacted, which ended, like the tragedies of old, in the death of the hero—surely in that day this was no mean performance, no small accomplishment.

Through stress of weather and fog it will be remembered the *St. Paul*, under command of Alexei Chirikoff, was separated from the *St. Peter*, the two vessels failing again to come together. Chirikoff, with the advice of his officers, having decided to continue the easterly course, found himself on the 26th of June in latitude  $48^{\circ}$  and it chanced that on the 30th day of the same month Bering was only twenty miles south of that position. As early as the 11th of July Chirikoff noticed driftwood, seals and gulls. He was then some two hundred and forty miles from land. Three or four days later in the night he sighted the moderately high land of the west coast of the Archipelago Alexandria, near the latitude  $55^{\circ} 21'$ , and on the following morning the conspicuous promontory afterwards named Cape Addington. Continuing on his way, the navigator observed a group of small, rocky islands on his port bow. This group was named the Hazy Islands by Captain Dixon in 1787. The *St. Paul* ran N. W. W. parallel to the coast under the steep, woody ridge north of the Cape Ommaney of Captain Vancouver, the Cape "Tschjrikoff of La Perouse." On the 17th it was estimated that the vessel was in latitude  $57^{\circ}$  in the region of Sitka Sound, which is a great indentation about one hundred and fifty square miles in this bold coast. In this neighbourhood a terrible disaster befell Chirikoff and his people. On the 17th of July, being in need of fresh water, the explorer despatched a boat manned by ten of his best seamen to the shore. Neither this boat, nor the one sent in search of it, which was the only boat remaining, ever returned or were they heard of again, and in all probability the men in charge of them fell victims to the savages that inhabited the place. Chirikoff was on an unknown and dangerous coast. He had no other boat and his numbers were greatly reduced by this calamity. At this juncture a council of officers decided that further attempts at geographical discovery were impracticable and that therefore the only thing to do was to return to Kamchatka.



There has been no little discussion as to the position of the large bay where the terrible disaster overtook Chirikoff. As a matter of geographic interest it may be stated that the general consensus of geographers and historians who have considered the matter is that the disaster occurred in Sitka Sound. It is well known that the natives of this region were powerful, overbearing and aggressive. At a later period they nearly succeeded in driving the Russians from their lands and they retained their warlike reputation even up to the time of the occupation of the country by the United States. It is therefore likely that they were prompt to resent any imprudence or ill treatment by a body of strangers. Professor George Davidson, whose personal knowledge of that whole coast line was extensive and whose researches add weight to his deductions, points out that there is a bare possibility that the disaster may have occurred in the neighbourhood of latitude  $57^{\circ} 15'$ , where is situated the comparatively small, but open bay named Guadalupe by the Spaniard Heceta, in 1775. But an examination of the explorers who have coasted these shores seems strongly to point to Sitka Sound as the great bay of Chirikoff.

After spending four months in that sea, Chirikoff, who had been a victim of the dreaded scurvy, returned to the harbour of Petropavlovsk. Thus ended the voyage, which was disastrous to the men engaged in it, important as it was geographically. Chirikoff recovered from his illness and searched the neighbouring seas in the hopes of meeting with Bering, but without success.

The operations of the Russians in Kamchatka and the voyages of Bering resulted in the important discovery of the hitherto unknown fur-bearing animal—the sea-otter. It was the costly pelt of this beautiful creature which offered the chief inducements for further expeditions and explorations in the sea which separates northeastern Asia and northwestern America. On the island where Bering died his crew killed many of these animals, the skins of which were later sold to Chinese merchants for large sums of money.

The Russian government, possibly tired of the worry and expense involved in the prosecution of trans-Siberian and American adventures, did not follow up the explorations of Bering, but enterprising individuals were always found to fit out expeditions for the hunting of the sea-otter. In the course of their traffickings they explored the Aleutian Islands, returning with rude sketches and maps. A brief sketch of these expeditions will suffice.



Altasoff and his band of Russians, Tartars and Cossacks arrived at Kamchatka toward the end of the seventeenth century and found the sea-otter, which abounded on the coast up to the middle of the eighteenth century, when the adventurers almost extirpated it in that country. One by one the numerous islands and groups of islands in that quarter of the globe were found by these rude explorers, who braved storm, shipwreck and death in their crazy vessels, the planks of which in many instances were held together only by thongs of rawhide. Thus different groups of the Aleutian chain were discovered before Glottoff, of infamous memory, reached the Kadiak Islands in 1763. In 1764 to 1768 Synd, a lieutenant of the Russian navy, explored Bering Strait. In fact, innumerable traders and adventurers, inflamed with the desire to make fortunes in the fur trade, voyaged into Bering Sea and among the Aleutian Islands, and before 1778, when Captain Cook visited that region, the Russians were firmly established there. The traders, Dr. Dall remarks, were men of no education and were governed only by their base passions and love of gain. Nevertheless their voyages added much to the knowledge of the islands between Kamchatka and America.

During these years many Russian companies or associations were formed in eastern Siberia and their officers and men searched the whole Aleutian chain for the haunts of the sea-otter. At one time there were as many as twenty-five or thirty of these companies engaged in the enterprise, and so devastating were their operations that the number of animals dwindled from tens of thousands to tens of hundreds in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. As the sea-otter became scarcer, the fur traders turned their attention to the great herds of the fur-seal, which had long been noted but not considered of great value commercially. While the pelt of the fur-seal was not nearly so valuable as that of the sea-otter, yet it soon came to be looked upon as an excellent substitute for the latter. In time the traders turned their attention to Bering Sea, and in 1786, after more than eighteen years of unremitting search, the seal rookeries were discovered by a rugged Muscovite ship's mate, Pribyloff by name. He at once took possession of the islands in the name of Russia, and upon them his name was subsequently bestowed. Prior to this, however, in 1781, Gregory Shelikoff and other Siberian merchants who had been engaged in the fur trade returned to Asia and





formed an association, and two years later fitted out three vessels which traversed the Pacific to the Peninsula of Alaska. The following year Shelikoff erected a factory on Kadiak, from which place he despatched expeditions to explore the neighbouring continent and to establish trading posts. In 1790 he organized at Irkutsk the Shelikoff Company, which, through the patronage of Empress Catharine II, secured a partial monopoly of the American fur trade. Alexander Baranoff, of Sitka fame, was placed in the management of the factories at Kadiak and Cook's Inlet. But the operations of independent traders were so disastrous to the Irkutsk Company, which, moreover, had suffered by the death of Shelikoff, that the most powerful of the rivals were persuaded to unite their interests with the older association under the name of the "Shelikoff United Trading Company." Further inroads into the company's field by new competitors induced the company to seek a grant of the fur trade in America and the Aleutian Islands from the Court at St. Petersburg, which was finally granted by the Emperor Paul on June 8, 1799, and under imperial ukase the "Russian-American Company" was organized. This grant gave to the company the control of all the coasts of America on the Pacific north of latitude 55°. The ukase created a powerful organization similar in its essential features to that established in North America under the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, and in India by the East India Company. By its terms the Russian-American Company practically became the agent of the Czar within the region named. The head office of the Company, originally at Irkutsk, was soon transferred to St. Petersburg, where most of the grand ducal families became shareholders in the enterprise, thus insuring a continuance of the favour and aid of the crown. In the territory itself, men and things were under the direction of the autocratic government of Baranoff, who at first resided at Kadiak. Other posts and districts were managed by inferior agents, accountable only to the chief director. As for the regulations, Professor Dall observes that they were just and humane but the enforcement of them was entrusted to men with whom justice and humanity were always subservient to interest and expediency. The morale of the company's servants has been summed up by Krusenstern in the trenchant sentences: "None but vagabonds and adventurers ever entered the company's service as *promishleniks*";—"It was their invariable destiny to pass a life of wretchedness in America"; and "few had the



good fortune ever to touch Russian soil again." In the days, however, when New Archangel, or Sitka, was the seat of government, many men of refinement and intelligence, with a high sense of honour and justice, were stationed in that little bit of old Russia transplanted into the new world.

Shortly after the promulgation of the ukase of 1799, Baranoff established Fort Archangel Gabriel, Sitka Sound, to which place he was accompanied by a large concourse of Aleutians. British and American adventurers, however, had already found their way to the Northwest coast, of which the first reliable information was given to the world by Captain Cook, and the Russians were often obliged to purchase their entire outfits in order to forestall competition. The Thlinkets, a warlike tribe, resented the intrusion of the Russians and fought desperately for their independence. In May, 1802, they attacked Fort Archangel Gabriel and drove out the garrison, killing all the officers and thirty men. In Yakutat Bay the Thlinkets made a determined attack upon the establishment there, but were repulsed; but in the attack upon Urbanoff and his fleet of ninety canoes in Kake Strait, the natives were victorious. In spite of the natives, however, Baranoff laid the foundation of the new fort at Sitka, which he called Fort Archangel Michael, and the settlement about it was christened New Archangel.

In these and the following years various scientific expeditions were fitted out by the Government of Russia, notable among them being the expedition of Krusenstern and Lisianski, who in 1804, 1805 and 1806 examined many of the unknown fiords and islands on the coast. Langsdorff also visited the Aleutian Islands at this time. These explorers were followed by Golofnin in 1807 and again in 1810. Lieutenant Otto von Kotzebue visited Bering Strait in 1815. In after years Lutke, Wrangell, Etolin, Lazareff and many explorers of lesser fame charted the coast and islands and plied the northern waters in all directions. They discovered islands, observed volcanoes and described the fauna and flora of the region so thoroughly that long before Alaska was ceded to the United States in 1867, Bering Sea, the wonderful chain of the Aleutian Islands, and the Northwest coast of America, and even the shores of the Arctic regions to the northeast of Bering Strait, were almost as familiar to the Russians as European seas and shores.



It must not be imagined, however, that the activities of the Russians were confined to Alaska. On the contrary it was the ambition of Baranoff, the great governor of the Russian-American Company, to plant the Russian flag not only on the Californian coast but also on the Sandwich Islands. In 1812 the governor was successful in carrying his point with regard to California, and under his protection Kushoff founded a Russian colony on Bodega Bay. This was done with the concurrence of the Spanish Government, although against the wishes of the Franciscan missionaries. The colony was called the Ross Settlement and the men stationed there were chiefly employed in agricultural pursuits and in drying the meat of wild cattle, which ranged in that neighbourhood. The post was finally abandoned in 1841 because the Russian-American Company had entered into an agreement with the Hudson's Bay Company, under the terms of which the latter were to furnish the Russians annually with large quantities of fresh provisions and other necessities. In 1839 the British Company agreed to furnish its Russian rival with 560,000 pounds of wheat, 19,920 pounds of flour, 16,160 pounds of peas, 16,160 pounds of barley, 36,880 pounds of bacon, 19,920 pounds of beef and 3,680 pounds of ham at certain fixed prices. All of these were the products of the Hudson's Bay Company's establishment at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River, which under the administration of the famous Dr. McLaughlin, had become an important agricultural centre, even in those early days.

For a period of sixty-eight years—from 1799 to 1867—the Russian-American Company ruled Alaska, but in summing up the results of its policies and activities little can be said in its favour in the light of the ethics and standards of today, though in some respects the present generation has little right to criticise the earlier generations of the so-called darker ages. Possibly the Russian atrocities in Alaska were no worse than those perpetrated in later years by the Belgians in the Congo or by the Turks in Armenia. An effort was made by Russian missionaries of the Greek church to convert the Aleutians and the warlike Thlinkets and other barbarous tribes, and they succeeded in ameliorating the condition of the natives. They established schools, churches and hospitals and worked faithfully and untiringly for a people whose minds were perhaps not able to grasp the great truths of Christianity. But the primitive inhabitants of Northwest America, ignorant, superstitious and cunning, yet child-



like in many ways, could not survive the contact with that brutal force which the fur wealth of the isolated islands and territories had attracted thither.

In 1866 William H. Seward, Secretary of State of the United States, proposed the purchase of Alaska from the Russians and negotiations with that end in view were opened with St. Petersburg. Professor Dall records, although he cannot vouch for the truth of the story, that these negotiations had their origin in the efforts of a company of United States citizens to purchase Alaska in order to carry on there a trade in fish, fur and timber, and that Seward, who had been asked to assist them, finding Russia willing to sell, secured the territory, not for the private company but for the nation. Be this as it may, on the 30th of March, 1867, the treaty of sale was agreed upon; on May 28th it was ratified by the United States and proclaimed by the President on June 20th. On the 6th of September, 1867, Gen. Jefferson C. Davis, U. S. A., was appointed commander of the military district of Alaska. Russian America was formally surrendered by the Russian colonial authorities to Gen. Lovell H. Rousseau, U. S. A., who had been appointed by the President to receive the territory, on October 18, 1867.

Thus ended the chapter of Russian activities in America. The history of that occupation is too often sordid and depressing, yet, with all its shortcomings and failures, it was in many respects a brilliant and heroic achievement. The outstanding features of the story are the voyages of Bering and Chirikoff; the adventures of the early Russian fur traders; the founding of the Russian-American Company in 1799; the scientific expeditions of Krusenstern and Lisianski, Commodore Billings, Kotzebue and others to northwestern America and Bering Sea; the emperor's ukase of 1821, claiming all territories north of the fifty-first parallel and the discussions which it aroused; the convention of 1824 between the United States and Russia; the convention of 1825 between Great Britain and Russia; the disputes between the Hudson's Bay and Russian-American Companies and their settlement; the operations of the British and French fleets in the north Pacific during the time of the Crimean war; and the cession of the territory to the United States in the year 1867.

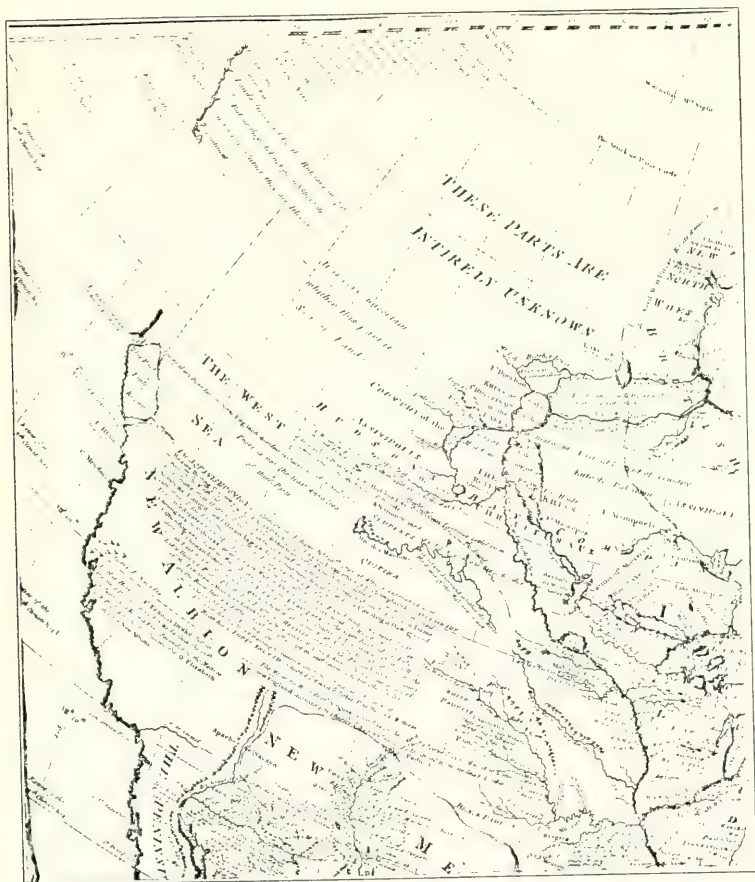
However, by far the most important result of that occupation was the bequest of the famous Alaskan boundary dispute to the statesmen of Great Britain and the United States of a later day and gen-





eration. For long years the eastern boundary of the Territory of Alaska was the subject of diplomatic discussion between the two countries—a discussion which was not laid at rest until the Alaska Boundary Tribunal handed down its award in 1903.





MAP OF WESTERN NORTH AMERICA, CIRCA, 1775



## CHAPTER V

### CAPTAIN JAMES COOK

In 1780 all that was known of the northwest coast was contained in the meagre reports of the expeditions of the Spaniards, Perez, Martinez, Heceta, Bodega y Quadra and Maurelle. Gradually, however, the lines of exploration converged towards that untravelled land that had hitherto defied all efforts to fathom its mystery. As a matter of fact the western slope of the North American continent—from the ramparts of the Rocky Mountains, to the islands that guard the continental coastline—was among the last of the American territories to be conquered by the explorer. Here and there a corner of the veil had been lifted by Russian and Spaniard, but it was not dreamed that behind it lay immeasurable potential wealth in vast forests, rolling plateaux, fertile valleys, and unfathomed mines of gold and silver. Glimpses of it had been caught, but as through a glass darkly. And that was all.

Now, a new force was to be directed to the far northwest coast; and novel and discordant elements were to enter into the discussions concerning it. Unknown though it then was, with limits still undefined, the Pacific slope was destined within a few years to come within the purview of European diplomacy, and to be a conspicuous feature in the zone of international politics.

The desire for knowledge of new lands and seas, which had found expression during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the arduous and successful exertions of mariners and travellers, gradually subsided and had lain for a time dormant; but it was revived in Great Britain in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when the English navigators of that age emulated the achievements of earlier generations. Of the names associated with this revival of maritime enterprise, that of Captain James Cook stands first and foremost.



Upon the conclusion of his second great Australian expedition, he was entrusted with another mission of equal, if not greater, importance. The Northwest Passage had again become the subject of animated discussion amongst geographers and men of science. It was agreed by the Admiralty that a scientific and exploring expedition, under the auspices of the British Crown, should be despatched to the northwest coast of America for the purpose of establishing the truth or falsity of the accounts regarding the existence of a navigable waterway connecting the two great oceans.

The first British scientific expedition, the aim of which was to discover the western approach of the supposed northern passage between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, was conceived, planned and sent on its way in 1776 by the Earl of Sandwich, then the First Lord of the Admiralty. The operations proposed to be pursued were so new, so extensive and so various that the skill and experience of Captain Cook, who but a short time previous had returned to England from his second voyage of circumnavigating the globe, seemed the one man of all others best fitted to conduct them. In addition to other rewards for his inestimable service to his country, and the world at large, he had been appointed to the command of Greenwich Hospital, there to enjoy the fame he had dearly earned; but he cheerfully relinquished this honourable station at home to engage in the conduct of an expedition that would expose him to the toils and perils of a third circumnavigation by a track hitherto unattempted. Heretofore, in the search for the Northwest Passage, British navigators, with the solitary exception of Sir Francis Drake, had confined their attention to the northeastern shores of the continent, but on this occasion the usual plan was to be reversed. The great task now before Captain Cook was to reach the high northern latitudes between Asia and America, and, instead of making a passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, one from the latter into the former was to be tried. Cook was therefore ordered to proceed into the Pacific ocean, through the chain of islands discovered by him in the southern tropic, and to hold such a course northward to the principal scene of his operations.

The plan of the voyage can best be given from the secret instructions which were issued by the Admiralty: It was directed that he should attempt to find out a northern passage by sea from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean; that he should proceed with two sloops directly





to the Cape of Good Hope, unless it was found necessary to stop at Madeira, Cape de Verde, or the Canary Islands; then to leave the Cape of Good Hope and proceed southward in search of some islands purported to have been seen by the French about the meridian of Mauritius. In case islands were found, Cook was to examine them thoroughly for a good harbour. It was planned he should stop at Otaheite, or Society Islands, touching at New Zealand on the way. At Otaheite he was to leave Omai, a chief of that island, who had been taken by Cook to England on a former voyage. Cook was strictly enjoined not "to touch upon any part of the Spanish dominions on the Western continent of America, unless driven thither by some unavoidable accident; in which case you are to stay no longer there than shall be absolutely necessary, and to be very careful not to give any umbrage or offense to any of the inhabitants or subjects of His Catholic Majesty. And if, in your farther progress to the Northward, as hereafter directed, you find any subjects of any European Prince or State upon any part of the coast you may think proper to visit, you are not to disturb them, or give them any just cause of offense, but, on the contrary, to treat them with civility and friendship."

The navigator was further instructed to reach latitude 65°, or further, if not obstructed by lands or ice, where he was to search for and explore rivers or inlets that might communicate with Hudson Bay or Baffin Bay. If there should be a certainty or even a probability of a water passage into one or both of these bays, he was to use his utmost endeavours to pass through with one or both of the sloops. In case he was satisfied there were no such passages, Cook was to repair to the port of St. Peter and St. Paul in Kamchatka, or any other eligible port, there to pass the winter, and in the spring of the ensuing year to proceed thence northward in the endeavour to find a northeast passage from the Pacific Ocean into the Atlantic or the North Sea, and having thoroughly explored such passage, make his way back to England.

There is no doubt that the Government of the time earnestly desired the success of the voyage and exhibited its interest therein by amending the Act of Parliament of 1745, which offered a reward of twenty thousand pounds for the discovery of a Northwest Passage. That act had applied only to the ships of private owners, and it was stipulated therein that the reward was to be paid only to such ships as should discover a passage opening into Hudson Bay. A new law

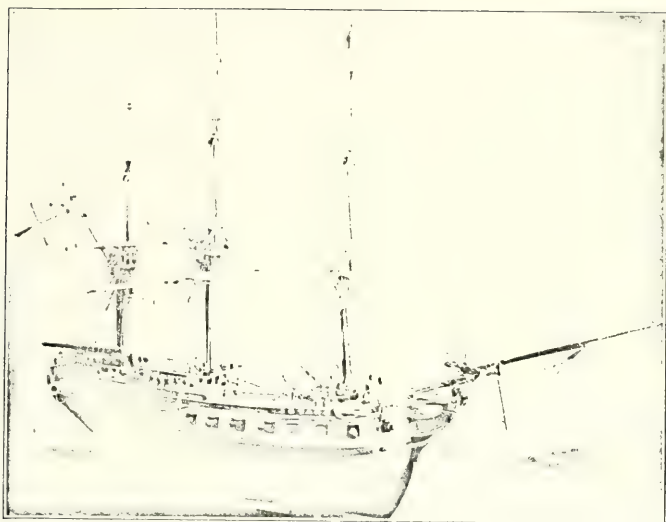


was passed extending the operation of the former act to ships of the Royal Navy, and providing that the passage by sea between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans might be sought for in any direction or paralled above the 52nd degree of north latitude. It was also enacted that any ship approaching within one degree of the North Pole should be entitled to a reward of five thousand pounds. It is safe to conclude, therefore, that Captain Cook's new enterprise was considered of more than ordinary importance.

Cook's own words may be quoted in proof of the interest shown by those high in authority. Under the date of Saturday, 8th of June, 1776, the following entry appears in his journal: "The Earl of Sandwich, Sir Hugh Palliser, and others of the Board of Admiralty paid us the last mark of the extraordinary attention they had all along paid to this equipment, by coming on board to see that everything was compleated to their desire and to the satisfaction of all who were to embark in the voyage. They and several other noblemen and gentlemen honoured me with their Company at dinner and were saluted with 17 guns and 3 cheers at their coming on board and also on going ashore."

On the 9th day of February, 1776, H. M. S. *Resolution* was commissioned for the voyage. On the following day Cook went on board, hoisted his pennant and began to enroll his men. At the same time the *Discovery*, a small vessel of three hundred tons, was purchased and placed in command of Captain Clerke, who had been Second Lieutenant of the *Resolution* on Cook's second voyage. Four months were consumed in fitting out the vessels for their long voyage, and it was not until June that they sailed for Plymouth, the *Resolution* anchoring at the Nore to wait for Captain Cook, who was then in London in consultation with the Admiralty. The *Resolution* sailed from the Nore at noon on the 25th of June and three days later dropped anchor in Plymouth Sound, whither the *Discovery* had preceded her. On the 8th of July the secret instructions already mentioned were received and on the 12th at eight in the evening the vessels weighed anchor and stood out of the Sound. Lieutenant James King, F. R. S., accompanied Cook in the *Resolution*, and it was this officer who continued the narrative of the expedition from the time of Cook's death to its conclusion. He also prepared a brief sketch of the famous navigator's life and career and tragic death, which is referred to later on in this chapter.





PHOTOGRAPH OF MODEL OF H. M. S. "RESOLUTION" NOW IN WHITBY MUSEUM



From a Penell Drawing by John Webber, R. A.

H. M. S. "RESOLUTION," IN NOOTKA SOUND, CAPTAIN JAMES COOK,  
COMMANDER



It is worthy of notice in passing that while the *Resolution* and *Discovery* were off Plymouth the *Diamond*, *Ambuscade* and *Uncorn* of the Royal Navy, with a fleet of transports consisting of sixty-two sail, bound to America with the last division of the Hessian troops and some cavalry, were forced into the Sound by adverse winds. Of this coincidence Cook remarks: "It could not but occur to us as a singular and affecting circumstance that at the very instance of our departure upon a voyage, the object of which was to benefit Europe by making fresh discoveries in North America, there should be the unhappy necessity of employing others of His Majesty's ships and of conveying numerous bodies of land forces to secure the obedience of those of that continent which had been discovered and settled by our country men in the last century."

In spite of the fact that so much time and trouble had been spent in preparing the vessels for sea, it was found that the seams of the *Resolution* had been so badly calked that they opened in the equatorial heat, and quantities of water entered the vessel. In fact, "there was hardly a man that could lie dry in his bed; the officers in the gun room were all driven out of their cabin by the water that came in through the sides." The spare sails were seriously damaged, and some quite ruined before they could be dried. Otherwise the voyage to the Cape of Good Hope was generally without incident. The equator was crossed on September 1st in longitude 27° 38' W., and Cape of Good Hope was sighted October 17th. The anchor was let go in Table Bay the day after. On November 10th the *Discovery* joined the *Resolution* at that port. The principal occupation of the crews at Cape Town consisted of exercising on shore the live cargo carried by the vessels. Two bulls, two heifers, two horses, two mares and two rams, not to mention ewes, goats, rabbits and poultry, were purchased at the Cape, to stock islands where some of them "might prove useful to posterity." It is recorded that when the *Resolution* left Table Bay she resembled Noah's Ark.

On the 30th of November, 1776, the vessels again weighed anchor. After visiting Kerguelen Land, Van Diemen's Land, New Zealand and the Friendly or Society Islands, Cook discovered early in the following year a group of large islands which he named the Sandwich Islands, in honour of the Earl of Sandwich, who had displayed so great an interest in the expedition.





In the course of this voyage, Cook acquired a mass of valuable information respecting the extensive archipelagoes of the mid-Pacific Ocean, all of which is duly set down in the official journal of the expedition. It would be interesting, as well as instructive, to spread upon these pages Cook's luminous description of that island world, but the story is scarcely germane to the subject under discussion. It will suffice that the explorer, with the aid of Anderson, the surgeon, and Webber, the artist, vividly portrays the appearance, manners, customs and social institutions of the primitive inhabitants of these islands.

After a monotonous voyage of a little over a month, in the course of which the vessels did not lose sight of each other, the coast of Oregon was sighted at a distance of ten or twelve leagues. Cook had instructed his navigating officer to reach the coast about the 45th parallel and an observation at noon of March 7th (1778) revealed the fact that the ship's position was  $44^{\circ} 33'$  north latitude,  $236^{\circ} 30'$  east longitude. The land appeared to be of a moderate height, diversified with hill and valley and almost everywhere covered with trees, but no distinguishing promontories or capes marked its shores, with the exception of one flat-topped hill, upon which Cook bestowed the name Cape Foulweather. From that point the *Resolution* and the *Discovery* sailed slowly up the coast, the vessels experiencing the unsettled climatic conditions common to that region in that season of the year. In this respect the British expedition was not more fortunate than the Spanish vessels under Perez and Heceta. In the circumstances it was not possible always to sail close to land; nevertheless, the land was rarely out of sight and it was generally seen quite clearly. The coast appeared almost straight, without any opening or inlet. The northern and southern extremes of the land formed distinct points named respectively Cape Perpetua and Cape Gregory, the former being in latitude  $44^{\circ} 6'$  and the latter in  $43^{\circ} 30'$ . It is worth observing, Cook remarks, that almost in this very latitude geographers had placed the Cape supposed to have been discovered or seen by Martin d'Aguilar in January, 1603, and the large opening or strait the discovery of which was also ascribed to that navigator; but careful search in nowise tended to verify the statements ascribed to him.

A severe gale, from the northwest, accompanied by flurries of snow, at this time forced Cook to clear the coast. He was driven



By Capt. J. C. &c.

Whereas the Passage from the Society Isles to the Northern <sup>Coast</sup>  
of America, is of considerable length both in distance &  
time, and as a part of it must be performed in the very  
depth of Winter, when gales of Wind and bad weather <sup>may</sup>  
be expected ~~which~~ and may possibly occasion a separation  
which you are to take all imaginable care to prevent.  
But if notwithstanding all our endeavours to keep company  
you should be separated from me, you are first to  
look for me where you last saw me, not seeing me in  
five days, you are to proceed in ~~direct~~ <sup>direct</sup> course as you  
can for the Coast of New Albion, as directed by their Lord-  
ships Instructions, a copy of which you have already  
received, for the Coast of New Albion, endeavouring to  
fall in with it in the Latitude of  $46^{\circ} 0'$  in which Latitude  
and at a convenient distance from the Coast, you are to  
cruise for me ten days, ~~providing that the condition of~~  
~~the weather is such that it is not~~ <sup>not</sup> seeing me in that time you  
are to put into the first convenient Port in, or to the  
Northward of that Latitude to recruit your Wood and  
Water, and to procure refreshments. During your stay  
in Port, you are <sup>compulsory</sup> to keep a good look out for me, therefore  
it will be necessary for you to make choice of a Port, or  
anchoring place, situated as near to the Sea coast as you  
can, the better to enable you to keep a good look out to see  
me when I appear in the offing. If I do not join you  
before the 1<sup>st</sup> of next April, you are to put to Sea and  
proceed Northward to the Latitude of  $56^{\circ}$  in which Latitude  
and at a convenient distance from the Coast, not earlier  
in fifteen ~~days~~ <sup>days</sup> you are to cruise for me till the 1<sup>st</sup>  
of May; not seeing me in that time you are to proceed  
Northward and endeavour to find a passage into the Atlantic  
Ocean through Hudson or Baffins Bays, as directed  
in the ~~above~~ <sup>above</sup> mentioned Instructions; But if you fail, should  
you be able to find any other way.

AUTOGRAPH LETTER BY CAPTAIN JAMES COOK TO CAPTAIN CLERKE, UPON THE  
DEPARTURE OF THE EXPEDITION FROM THE SANDWICH ISLANDS,  
JANUARY, 1778



back upon his course as far southward as the forty-second parallel. Then boisterous weather and calms succeeded each other for several days; so it was not until March 22nd that land was again seen at a distance of nine leagues, in latitude  $47^{\circ} 5'$ . A small round hill to the northward had the appearance of an island and "between this island or rock and the northern extreme of the land there appeared to be a small opening, which flattered us with the hopes of finding an harbour." But these hopes were not realized, for as the vessels drew nearer it appeared that the wished-for opening was closed by low land. "On this account," observes Cook, "I called the point of land to the north of it Cape Flattery," and so one of the landmarks of the northwest coast received its name. From that day to this the name Cape Flattery has appeared on the charts to commemorate the disappointment of the famous circumnavigator. Cook describes the land to the southward as of moderate height, covered with forests, and pleasant and fertile in appearance. According to an observation taken on board the *Resolution*, the Cape lay in latitude  $48^{\circ} 15'$  north. Its true position, however, is latitude  $48^{\circ} 22\frac{1}{2}'$  north and longitude  $124^{\circ} 44'$  west.<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of notice that Cook's observations vary little from those taken with the greatest care in more recent years by officers of the Royal Navy and the Coast and Geodetic Survey of the United States; on the other hand, the positions assigned to the various capes, bays and inlets of this region by the Spaniards are, as a general rule, far from correct.

While in the neighbourhood Cook searched for the strait said to have been discovered in 1592 by the Greek pilot, Apostolos Valerianos, or Juan de Fuca, but his efforts were no more successful than those of the Spaniards three years before, and for the same reason,—on both occasions the opening was sought between the forty-seventh and forty-eighth parallels, the position given by Michael Lok, Delisle and Buache. It is evident that Cook was not favourably impressed with the narratives of geographers respecting the discovery of the Strait of Anian. More than once he speaks strongly upon the subject. His remarks touching Martin d'Aguilar have been noted. Later he as contemptuously dismissed the relation of De Fonte. Now, in a few terse sentences, he disposed of the oft repeated account of the Greek pilot's voyage: "It is in this very latitude where we now were," Cook writes, "that geographers have placed the pretended

<sup>1</sup> British Columbia Pilot, 3d ed., 1905, p. 24.



strait of Juan de Fuca. But we saw nothing like it; nor is there the least probability that ever any such thing existed." <sup>2</sup> Yet, within a few miles lay the entrance to a strait leading to a labyrinth of sounds, inlets, gulfs and bays, studded with rock-girt, wooded islands of enchanting loveliness,—one of the most beautiful inland seas of the world. It was peculiarly unfortunate that at this time the *Resolution* and *Discovery* were obliged to find an offing in the teeth of a gale that threatened to drive them ashore. Otherwise Cook might have discovered, or rediscovered, the strait found by Captain Barkley of the *Loudoun*, or *Imperial Eagle*, in 1787, and named by him in honour of the mythical hero Juan de Fuca.

But that was not to be. Cook passed the opening at sea in storm and sleet. He did not make another landfall until Sunday, March 29th, when the rugged snow-covered hills of Vancouver Island hove in sight. The valleys and the coast were covered with tall straight trees "that formed a beautiful prospect, as of one vast forest." In the southeast the land formed a low point, off which a line of foam marked the position of sunken rocks and on that account it was named Point Breakers. Observations determined that Point Breakers was in latitude  $49^{\circ}15'$  and Woody Point in latitude  $50^{\circ}$ . Woody Point is now known as Cape Cook and Breakers Point as Point Estevan. The extensive bight between these points was called Hope Bay because it was hoped that in it a good harbour would be found nor in this was the explorer disappointed. In the evening the *Resolution* entered an arm of the sea and anchored, so close to shore that it could be reached with a hawser. The wind failed the *Discovery* however, and she lay for the night off the entrance to the inlet. Thus, on March 29, 1778, the storm-beaten vessels found a safe haven, where it was hoped "all their wants would be plentifully supplied."

On the following morning a search was made for a safe anchorage which was soon found. Not far from where the ships lay Cook discovered "a convenient, snug cove well suited to our purpose." Lieutenant King, who had been despatched with three armed boats early in the morning to reconnoitre the inlet, returned at mid-day with the report that he had found an excellent harbour lying on the north-west side of the land. But to save time, it was decided to make the headquarters of the expedition in the small bay discovered by the commander. On Tuesday the thirty-first the ships were hauled into

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<sup>2</sup> Cook, *Voyages*, p. 263.









Resolution Cove, where they were moored, head and stern, the hawsers being fastened to the trees on shore.

No sooner had the ships anchored in Hope Bay than it was discovered that the land was inhabited. Three canoes approached and one of the natives made a long harangue, in the course of which he cast white feathers upon the water, while some of his companions threw handfuls of red dust or powder. The orator was clad in fur and held in each hand a rattle which he used vigorously. After repeated exhortations, of which not a word was understood, the natives lay at a little distance from the ship and conversed with each other without exhibiting the least surprise. Now and again the harangue would be repeated, but what pleased the strangers more than this guttural oratory was an air sung "with a degree of softness and melody which we could not have expected; the word 'haela' being oft repeated as the burden of the song." Many canoes soon gathered about the ships. At one time no less than thirty-two were observed, each carrying from three to eight persons, men and women. One of the little vessels attracted particular attention on account of its emblazonment of a bird's eye and bill of an enormous size. In it sat a chief of some consequence, who was no less remarkable than his little vessel. His head-dress was of feathers and he was painted in an extraordinary manner: "He held in his hand a carved bird of wood, as large as a pigeon, with which he rattled as the person first mentioned had done; and was no less vociferous with his harangue, which was attended with some expressive gestures."

The natives behaved very peaceably and gave no sign of hostility, but they could by no means be induced to go on board. Apart from this evidence of timidity, however, they gave no sign of fear and traded with great readiness, taking whatever was offered in exchange for their belongings. They were more anxious for iron than for any other commodity, appearing to be perfectly acquainted with the use of that metal.

With reference to Cook's discovery of Nootka Sound it may be worth while to recall that the legendary lore of the Indians of that place is not silent upon the point. There is today a tradition among the Nootkan Indians which runs somewhat as follows: One day two chiefs, Tsaxawasip (one of Chief Maquinna's names) and Nanaimis of the Muchalats, saw in the offing the tops of three sticks rising up, which bye and bye grew bigger and rose out of the water.



At first they thought it must be an island appearing, but as the object grew larger they saw that it was some kind of water craft. The ship was going quickly and making great waves. Then it was thought that it must be the work of Haietlik, or the lightning-snake, making it move so quickly, and that the snake was working under water; but others thought it must be the work of Quaots (the supreme deity of the Nootkans) and therefore a supernatural manifestation. As the vessel came nearer all the men and women grew very much afraid. Some of them thought that it was magic, and some thought that it was a salmon that had been changed by magic. But the two chiefs of the Muchalats thought that it must be the work of Quaots. A courageous man named Towik, a warrior who had killed at least ten men, said that it would be well to conceal all the people and to segregate the women for at least ten months. He also recommended that all their property should at once be put out of sight. A woman doctor named Hahatsaik, who had power over all kinds of salmon, appeared with a whalebone rattle in each hand; she put on her red cedar bark cap and apron and sang, saying that it must be a salmon turned into a boat. The natives now launched a canoe with three strong young men as a crew and the woman magician, Hahatsaik, sat in the middle. This canoe went out to see the ship, which was sailing straight for the harbour on Bligh Island, and then followed behind. Hahatsaik hailed the ship and called out "Hello you, you spring salmon, hello you dog salmon, hello coho salmon."

Then another canoe came with another doctor, named Wiwai, who hailed Captain Cook in the same manner. Wiwai then went back to the village, and Nanaimis, taking two fine beaver skins out of his storage chest, put off to the ship in his canoe with ten strong men. Captain Cook hailed the canoe and asked the name of the chief, who replied, "My name is Nanaimis; what is your name?" Captain Cook then went into his cabin and came out with blankets under his arm and asked Nanaimis to come into his ship. But Nanaimis declined, saying—"No, I would rather stay in my canoe." Whereupon Cook asked him to shake hands and offered him two black blankets as a free gift. Then Nanaimis saw that Cook was not an enchanted salmon, but only a man. The chief opened a box on which he was sitting and took out the two beaver skins and presented them to Captain Cook, who accepted them with pleasure.



Tsaxawasip, or Maquinna, also put off to the ship. "I am Maquinna," said the chief to Captain Cook. "My village is a little way off there, near the entrance to the inlet. It is a safe and fine harbour. I want you to come and stay with me next year. You will be well treated." He then presented a fine sea-otter skin to Captain Cook, who had by that time put on a fine gold-braided hat which he offered to Maquinna in return for his gift. Then the natives gave a wolf dance on the beach for the entertainment of the strangers.<sup>3</sup>

Such is the tradition of the Nootkan people. It is not an easy matter to decide as to how much of the story may be worthy of credence; but it is at least likely that so important an event as the sudden appearance of two large vessels off Nootka would find a place in the annals of the native tribes of that locality.

Captain Cook's description of the natives, their character and habits, is minute and interesting. Long as it is, that description deserves a place in a narrative dealing with the earliest beginnings of the history of the Northwest Coast, and it will therefore be quoted in full. It follows:

"The persons of the natives are, in general, under the common stature; but not slender in proportion, being commonly pretty full or plump, though not muscular. Neither doth the soft fleshiness seem ever to swell into corpulence; and many of the older people are rather spare, or lean. The visage of most of them is round and full; and sometimes, also, broad, with high prominent cheeks; and, above these, the face is frequently much depressed, or seems fallen in quite across between the temples; the nose also flattening at its base, with pretty wide nostrils, and a rounded point. The forehead rather low; the eyes small, black, and rather languishing than sparkling; the mouth round, with large round thickish lips; the teeth tolerably equal and well set, but not remarkably white. They have either no beards at all, which was most commonly the case, or a small thin one upon the point of the chin; which does not arise from any natural defect of hair on that part, but from plucking it out more or less; for some of them, and particularly the old men, have not only considerable beards all over the chin, but whiskers, or mustachios; both on the upper lip and running from thence toward the lower jaw obliquely downward. Their eye-brows are also scanty and always

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<sup>3</sup> Chief George of Nootka Sound is the authority for this legend.





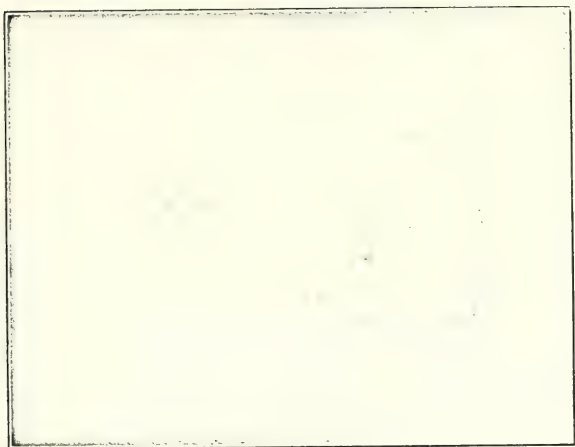
narrow; but the hair of the head is in great abundance, very coarse and strong; and, without a single exception, black, straight, and lank, or hanging down over the shoulders. The neck is short; the arms and body have no particular mark of beauty or elegance in their formation, but are rather clumsy; and the limbs, in all, are very small in proportion to the other parts, and crooked, or ill made, with large feet badly shaped, and projecting ankles. This last defect seems, in a great measure, to arise from their sitting too much on their hams or knees, both in their canoes and houses.

"Their colour we could never positively determine, as their bodies were incrustated with paint and dirt; though, in particular cases, when these were well rubbed off, the whiteness of the skin appeared almost to equal that of Europeans; though rather of that pale effete cast which distinguishes those of our Southern nations. Their children, whose skins had never been stained with paint, also equalled ours in whiteness. During their youth, some of them have no disagreeable look, if compared to the generality of the people; but this seems to be entirely owing to the particular animation attending that period of life; for, after attaining a certain age, there is hardly any distinction. Upon the whole, a very remarkable sameness seems to characterize the countenances of the whole nation; a dull phlegmatic want of expression, with very little variation, being strongly marked in all of them.

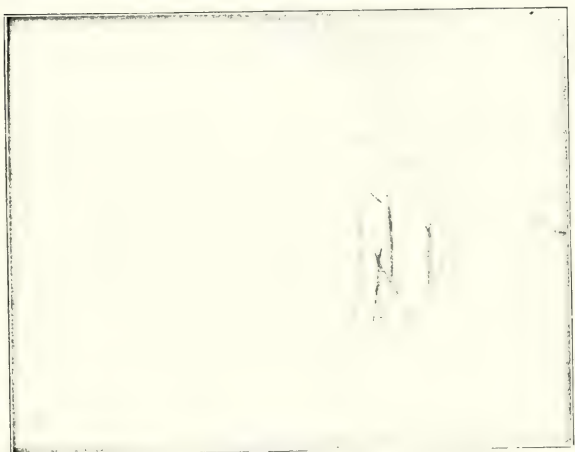
"The women are nearly of the same size, colour, and form, with the men, from whom it is not easy to distinguish them, as they possess no natural delicacies sufficient to render their persons agreeable; and hardly any one was seen, even amongst those who were in the prime of life, who had the least pretensions to be called handsome.

"Their common dress is a flaxen garment, or mantle, ornamented on the upper edge by a narrow strip of fur, and, at the lower edge, by fringes or tassels. It passes under the left arm and is tied over the right shoulder by a string before, and one behind, near its middle; by which means both arms are left free; and it hangs evenly, covering the left side, but leaving the right open, except from the loose part of the edges falling upon it, unless when the mantle is fastened by a girdle (of coarse matting or woollen) round the waist, which is often done. Over this, which reaches below the knees, is worn a small cloak of the same substance, likewise fringed at the lower part. In shape this resembles a round dish cover, being quite close, except in the middle, where there is a hole just large enough to admit the





A MAN OF NOOTKA SOUND



A WOMAN OF NOOTKA SOUND



head; and then, resting upon the shoulders, it covers the arms to the elbows, and the body as far as the waist. Their head is covered with a cap, of the figure of a truncated cone, or like a flower-pot, made of fine matting, having the top frequently ornamented with a round or pointed knob, or bunch of leathern tassels; and there is a string that passes under the chin, to prevent its blowing off.

"Besides the above dress, which is common to both sexes, the men frequently throw over their other garments the skin of a bear, wolf, or sea-otter, with the hair outward, and tie it, as a cloak, near the upper part, wearing it sometimes before, and sometimes behind. In rainy weather, they throw a coarse mat about their shoulders. They have also woolen garments, which, however, are little in use. The hair is commonly worn hanging down loose; but some, when they have no cap, tie it in a bunch on the crown of the head.

"Their dress, upon the whole, is convenient, and would by no means be inelegant were it kept clean. But as they rub their bodies constantly over with a red paint, of a clayey or coarse ochry substance, mixed with oil, their garments, by this means, contract a rancid offensive smell and a greasy nastiness. So that they make a very wretched, dirty appearance; and, what is still worse, their heads and their garments swarm with vermin, which, so depraved is their taste for cleanliness, we used to see them pick off, with great composure, and eat.

"Though their bodies are always covered with red paint, their faces are often stained with a black, a brighter red, or a white colour, by way of ornament. The last of these gives them a ghastly, disgusting aspect. They also strew the brown martial mica upon the paint, which makes it glitter. The ears of many of them are perforated in the lobe, where they make a pretty large hole; and two others higher up on the outer edge. In these holes they hang bits of bone; quills fixed upon a leathern thong; small shells; bunches of woolen tassels, or pieces of thin copper, which our beads could never supplant. The septum of the nose, in many, is also perforated, through which they draw a piece of soft cord; and others wear, at the same place, small thin pieces of iron, brass, or copper, shaped almost like a horseshoe, the narrow opening of which receives the septum, so as that the two points may gently pinch it; and the ornament thus hangs over the upper lip. The rings of our brass buttons, which they eagerly purchased, were appropriated to this use. About their wrists they wear bracelets or bunches of white bugle beads,



made of a conic shelly substance; bunches of thongs, with tassels; or a broad black shining horny substance, of one piece. And about their ankles they also frequently wear many folds of leathern thongs, or the sinews of animals twisted to a considerable thickness.

"Thus far of their ordinary dress and ornaments; but they have some that seem to be used only on extraordinary occasions; either when they exhibit themselves as strangers, in visits of ceremony, or when they go to war. Amongst the first may be considered the skins of animals, such as wolves or bears, tied on in the usual manner, but ornamented at the edges with broad borders of fur, or of the woollen stuff manufactured by them, ingeniously wrought with various figures. These are worn either separately, or over their other common garments. On such occasions, the most common head-dress is a quantity of withe, or half-beaten bark, wrapped about the head; which, at the same time, has various large feathers, particularly those of eagles, stuck in it, or is entirely covered, or, we may say, powdered with small white feathers. The face, at the same time, is variously painted, having its upper and lower parts of different colours, the strokes appearing like fresh gashes; or it is besmeared with a kind of tallow, mixed with paint, which is afterward formed into a great variety of regular figures, and appears like carved work. Sometimes, again, the hair is separated into small parcels, which are tied at intervals of about two inches, to the end, with thread; and others tie it together, behind, after our manner, and stick branches of the *cupressus thyoides* in it. Thus dressed, they have a truly savage and incongruous appearance; but this is much heightened when they assume, what may be called, their monstrous decorations. These consist of an endless variety of carved wooden masks or vizors, applied on the face or to the upper part of the head or forehead. Some of these resemble human faces, furnished with hair, beards, and eye-brows; others, the heads of birds, particularly of eagles and quebrantahuesos; and many, the heads of land and sea-animals, such as wolves, deer, porpoises, and others. But, in general, these representations much exceed the natural size; and they are painted and often strewed with pieces of foliaceous *mica*, which makes them glitter, and serves to augment their enormous deformity. They even exceed this sometimes, and fix on the same part of the head large pieces of carved work, resembling the prow of a canoe, painted in the same manner, and projecting to a considerable distance. So fond are they of these





disguises, that I have seen one of them put his head into a tin kettle he had got from us, for want of another sort of mask. Whether they use these extravagant masquerade ornaments on any particular religious occasion or diversion; or whether they be put on to intimidate their enemies when they go to battle, by their monstrous appearance; or as decoys when they go to hunt animals, is uncertain. But it may be concluded, that, if travellers or voyagers, in an ignorant and credulous age, when many unnatural or marvellous things were supposed to exist, had seen a number of people decorated in this manner, without being able to approach so near as to be undeceived, they would readily have believed, and, in their relations, would have attempted to make others believe, that there existed a race of beings partaking of the nature of man and beast; more especially, when, besides the heads of animals on the human shoulders, they might have seen the whole bodies of their men-monsters covered with quadrupeds' skins."

Captain Cook continues:

"The only dress amongst the people of Nootka, observed by us, that seems peculiarly adapted to war, is a thick leathern mantle doubled, which, from its size, appears to be the skin of an elk, or buffalo tanned. This they fasten on, in the common manner; and it is so contrived, that it may reach up, and cover the breast quite to the throat, falling, at the same time, almost to the heels. It is, sometimes, ingeniously painted in different compartments; and it is not only sufficiently strong to resist arrows; but, as they informed us by signs, even spears cannot pierce it; so that it may be considered as their coat of mail, or most complete defensive armour. Upon the same occasion, they sometimes wear a kind of leathern cloak, covered with rows of dried hoofs of deer, disposed horizontally, appended by leathern thongs, covered with quills; which, when they move, make a loud rattling noise, almost equal to that of many small bells. It seems doubtful, however, whether this part of their garb be intended to strike terror in war, or only is to be considered as belonging to their eccentric ornaments on ceremonious occasions. For we saw one of their musical entertainments, conducted by a man dressed in this sort of cloak, with his mask on, and shaking his rattle.

"Though these people cannot be viewed without a kind of horror, when equipped in such extravagant dresses, yet, when divested of them, and beheld in their common habit and actions, they have not



the least appearance of ferocity in their countenances; and seem, on the contrary, as observed already, to be of a quiet, phlegmatic, and inactive disposition; destitute, in some measure, of that degree of animation and vivacity that would render them agreeable as social beings. If they are not reserved, they are far from being loquacious; but their gravity is, perhaps, rather a consequence of the disposition just mentioned, than of any conviction of its propriety, or the effect of any particular mode of education. For, even in the greatest paroxysms of their rage, they seem unable to express it sufficiently, either with warmth of language or significance of gestures."

In speaking of the powers of oratory, Cook observes:

"Their orations, which are made either when engaged in any altercation or dispute, or to explain their sentiments publicly on other occasions, seem little more than short sentences, or rather single words, forcibly repeated and constantly in one tone and degree of strength, accompanied only with a single gesture, which they use at every sentence, jerking their whole body a little forward, by bending the knees, their arms hanging down by their sides at the same time."

Captain Cook's account of the manners and customs of the Nootkans is important ethnologically, and so interesting historically, that, in spite of the length of the foregoing excerpt, it may well be concluded in the navigator's own words:

"Though there be but too much reason, from their bringing to sale human skulls and bones, to infer that they treat their enemies with a degree of brutal cruelty, this circumstance rather marks a general agreement of character with that of almost every tribe of uncivilized man, in every age, and in every part of the globe, than that they are to be reproached with any charge of peculiar inhumanity. We had no reason to judge unfavourably of their disposition in this respect. They seem to be a docile, courteous, good-natured people; but notwithstanding the predominant phlegm, of their tempers, quick in resenting what they look upon as an injury; and, like most other passionate people, as soon forgetting it. I never found that these fits of passion went farther than the parties immediately concerned; the spectators not troubling themselves about the quarrel, whether it was with any of us, or amongst their own body; and preserving as much indifference as if they had not known anything about it. I have often seen one of them rave and scold, without



any of his countrymen paying the least attention to his agitation; and when none of us could trace the cause, or the object of his displeasure. In such cases they never discover the least symptom of timidity, but seem determined, at all events, to punish the insult. For, even with respect to us, they never appeared to be under the least apprehension of our superiority; but when any difference happened, were just as ready to avenge the wrong as amongst themselves.

"Their other passions, especially their curiosity, appear in some measure to lie dormant. For few expressed any desire to see or examine things wholly unknown to them; and which, to those truly possessed of that passion, would have appeared astonishing. They were always contented to procure the articles they knew they wanted, regarding everything else with great indifference; nor did our persons, apparel, and manners, so different from their own, or even the extraordinary size and construction of our ships, seem to excite admiration, or even engage attention.

"One cause of this may be their indolence, which seems considerable. But, on the other hand, they are certainly not wholly unsusceptible of the tender passions; if we may judge from their being so fond of music, which is mostly of the grave or serious, but truly pathetic sort. They keep the exactest concert in their songs, which are often sung by great numbers together, as those already mentioned, with which they used to entertain us in their canoes. These are generally slow and solemn; but the music is not of that confined sort found amongst many rude nations; for the variations are very numerous and expressive, and the cadence or melody powerfully soothing. Besides their full concerts, sonnets of the same grave cast were frequently sung by single performers, who keep time by striking the hand against the thigh. However, the music was sometimes varied, from its predominant solemnity of air; and there were instances of stanzas being sung in a more gay and lively strain, and even with a degree of humour.

"The only instruments of music (if such they may be called) which I saw amongst them, were a rattle; and a small whistle, about an inch long, incapable of any variation, from having but one hole. They use the rattle when they sing; but upon what occasions they use the whistle I know not, unless it be when they dress themselves like particular animals, and endeavour to imitate their howl or cry. I once saw one of them dressed in a wolf's skin, with the head over



his own, and imitating that animal by making a squeaking noise with one of these whistles, which he had in his mouth. The rattles are, for the most part, made in the shape of a bird, with a few pebbles in the belly, and the tail is the handle. They have others, however, that bear rather more resemblance to a child's rattle.

"In trafficking with us, some of them would betray a knavish disposition, and carry off our goods without making any return. But, in general, it was otherwise; and we had abundant reason to commend the fairness of their conduct. However, their eagerness to possess iron and brass, and, indeed, any kind of metal, was so great that few of them could resist the temptation to steal it, whenever an opportunity offered. The inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, as appears from a variety of instances in the course of this voyage, rather than be idle, would steal anything that they could lay their hands upon, without ever considering, whether it could be of use to them or no. The novelty of the object, with them, was a sufficient motive for their endeavouring, by any indirect means, to get possession of it; which marked that, in such cases, they were rather actuated by a childish curiosity than by a dishonest disposition, regardless of the modes of supplying real wants. The inhabitants of Nootka, who invaded our property, cannot have such apology made for them. They were thieves in the strictest sense of the word; for they pilfered nothing from us, but what they knew could be converted to the purposes of private utility, and had a real value according to their estimation of things. And it was lucky for us that nothing was thought valuable by them, but the single articles of our metals. Linen, and such like things, were perfectly secure from their depredations; and we could safely leave them hanging out ashore all night, without watching. The same principle which prompted our Nootka friends to pilfer from us, it was natural to suppose, would produce a similar conduct in their intercourse with each other. And, accordingly, we had abundant reason to believe, that stealing is much practiced amongst them; and that it chiefly gives rise to their quarrels; of which we saw more than one instance."

The vessels were no sooner snugly moored in Resolution Cove than the place assumed an air of unwonted activity. No time was lost in making the necessary repairs to the ships, which were the immediate object of the visit.





An observatory was erected upon an elevated rock on one side of the cove, close to the *Resolution*; an officer and a party of men were sent to cut wood and to clear a place on the beach to facilitate watering; others were employed in brewing spruce beer and in setting up a blacksmith forge.

The news of the arrival of strangers soon spread abroad and brought a great concourse of curious natives from all parts of the Sound. At times more than a hundred canoes clustered about the ships. To introduce themselves, as it were, or to announce their arrival, the crews would dexterously propel their canoes three times round the ships, while a chief, or person of consequence, stood up and spoke in a loud voice. The Indians brought with them furs and various implements of native manufacture—cloth of bark, or woolen stuff, bags filled with red ochre, beads and even ornaments of brass and iron. But the most extraordinary of all the articles that they exhibited were "human skulls and hands not yet quite stripped of the flesh, which they made our people plainly understand they had eaten; and indeed some of them had evident marks that they had been upon the fire." From the display of these grim relics Cook had reason to suspect that the natives were addicted to cannibalism, although no instance of that horrid practice was observed while the vessels were anchored in the Sound. It is now known that the cannibalism of the West Coast tribes was purely ceremonial. The practice was not general as in the South Sea Islands. The natives were anxious to trade and readily accepted in exchange for their various articles looking-glasses, buttons, gewgaws and trinkets, knives, chisels, iron, tin, and nails, or metal of any kind. Glass beads and linen neither excited their cupidity nor their vanity. Both were rejected. These Indians were trained thieves and dexterously removed brass buttons from coats, brass fittings and even nails from woodwork, in fact, every particle of metal that they could lay their hands on.

Cook stayed in Nootka Sound for four weeks. Nearly all of the time was spent in preparing new masts and spars to take the place of the ones which had rotted on the long voyage from England—the first recorded instance of the use of the timber of Vancouver Island by Europeans. The officers, therefore, had little time to explore the fiords and arms of the inlet. Cook, however, examined the west side of the Sound, and visited a deserted village, hard by a grove of



immense pine trees, where he observed large fishing weirs composed of wicker work. Crossing over to the east side he ascertained, as he had already surmised, that the land off which his ships lay was a small island.

While the ship's company were engaged in their several occupations, Webber, the artist, employed his time in drawing the scenery and savages of this new and strange country. The anthropologist and the historian owe him a debt of gratitude for his faithful sketches of implements, ceremonial trappings, and other objects in common use among the natives. Many of Webber's sketches are to be found in the large folio of views which accompanies the official edition of Cook's Third Voyage. In the meantime, Anderson, the young surgeon of the expedition, was not idle. He prepared an extended account of the manners and customs of the aborigines. Anderson's notes will always be of interest to the anthropologist and the historian, if for no other reason than that they contain the first scientific observations upon a primitive social organization and a rude culture which had existed here from time immemorial. The pagan tribes of Nootka occupy a place in the history of British Columbia analogous to that of Caesar's Britons in the annals of England.

On his arrival in the inlet, Captain Cook had named it "King George's Sound," but later he changed the name to "Nootka," because he considered that to be the title by which the place was known to the natives. It was evidently bestowed under a misapprehension because there is nothing to show that the natives ever called the place by that name. Two or three theories have been advanced to account for Cook's mistake, but perhaps the most reasonable explanation is that of the Reverend A. J. Brabant, for many years a resident of Hesquiat. "The word 'Nootka,'" he says, "is the frequentation of 'nook-sitl,' to go around; make a circuit. 'Nootka-a' would be a form of the imperative (accent on the last 'a' being slight), go around. 'Nootka-minish' we have been around. 'Nootka-aktl-nish' we are about to go around. Some form of the word 'nootka' may be applied to the making of a circuit of the globe, or of an island small or large, &c., only the affix varies according to time, person or place."<sup>4</sup> It has been conjectured that Cook, after his reconnaissance of the Sound may have asked an Indian what the place was called in the native tongue. The Indian probably misunderstood him, but re-

<sup>4</sup> Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, p. 359; See also Swan, *Haidah Indians*, pp. 13-14.



membering that the white men had sailed round the small island, may possibly have used in reply some form of the derivative "nootk," thus leaving the impression in Cook's mind that such was the native name of the place.<sup>7</sup> The explanation is not altogether satisfactory, but be that as it may, from that day to this the inlet has been known as Nootka Sound.

Cook, of course, was not aware of the insular character of the Nootkan region. He took it for granted that he was on the continental coast of North America. As a matter of fact Vancouver Island did not assume its true shape on the map until later than 1792, in which year Captain Vancouver sailed through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the Gulf of Georgia and Johnston's Straits into Queen Charlotte Sound, thus establishing the fact that the whole of this region is detached from the mainland.

In spite of the fact that the natives possessed, comparatively speaking, a large amount of iron, which they had no means of procuring for themselves, the explorer concluded, after careful observation that the Sound had never been visited before. It was evident that iron was too common, and the use of it too well known, for the natives to have received their first knowledge of it in the last few years. It was supposed therefore that the metal things had passed from tribe to tribe from Hudson's Bay to the shores of the Pacific; or that they had originally started upon their long journey in Mexico and reached their destination after passing through the hands of successive native traders. However, it is just as likely, if not more probable, that the metal had been obtained in the first place from Russian traders, who had long ago established posts on the Kamchatkan Peninsula. It is not a far cry from Nootka Sound to the Aleutian Islands.

In the light of Father Crespi's Journal, Cook's claim to priority of discovery would seem to be irrefutable. In after years, much was made of the fact that the two silver spoons stolen from Juan Perez's vessel, the *Santiago*, were purchased from the Indians by one of Cook's officers. This, it was asserted by the Spaniards, and later by American writers, proved conclusively that Perez had visited the place in 1774. But Cook expressly relates that the spoons were obtained, not from inhabitants of the Sound, but from natives

<sup>7</sup> Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, p. 360.



who had journeyed some distance to visit the ships. In 1789, Estevan José Martinez himself, in accordance with his instructions, used Cook's chart apparently because the map of Perez failed to show Nootka Sound. Of course, this fact can scarcely be adduced as evidence, because a navigator would naturally avail himself of the experience of other explorers.

Everything at last being in readiness, on the morning of Sunday, the 26th of April, 1778, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* sailed from Nootka Sound and proceeded on their voyage, passing the locality "where geographers have placed the pretended Strait of Admiral de Fonte." Advancing to the north, Cook found the coast from Cape Edgcumbe trending north and northeasterly for six or seven leagues, and there forming a large bay, in the entrance of which were some islands, for which reason he named it the Bay of Islands. In this bay the Spaniards in 1775 evidently found their port, which they called De los Remedios, in the latitude of  $57^{\circ} 20'$ . Continuing on this course, a very high-peaked mountain was discovered, which was named Mount Fair Weather.

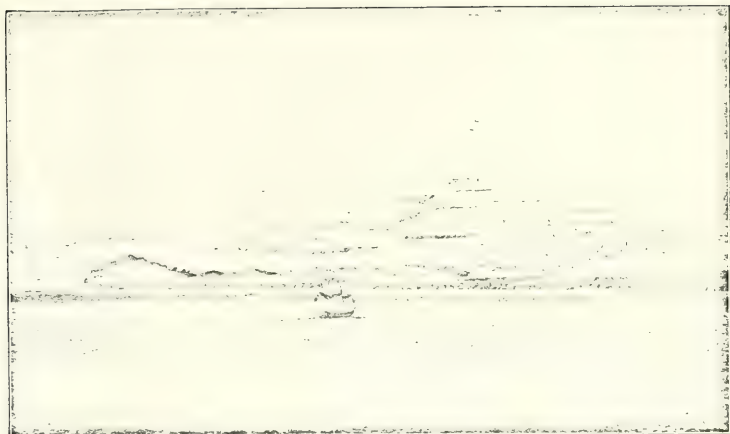
By May 5th, Cook had reached the latitude of  $58^{\circ} 53'$ , where the summit of an elevated mountain appeared above the horizon, of which Cook says, "We supposed it to be Bering's Mount St. Elias, and it stands by that name in our chart." By the 10th of that month, he passed a point of land which he named Cape Suckling, on the north side of which is a bay that appeared to be of some extent. Several small islands were discovered in the bay, one of which was named Kaye's Island as a mark of esteem for the Rev. Dr. Kaye, chaplain to His Majesty, George III. Comptroller's Bay was sighted on May 11th and on the 12th a point of land, which Cook named Cape Hinchinbroke. Hauling close under the latter, the vessels anchored before a small cove a little within the cape and about a quarter of a mile from the shore.

From the above mentioned point Cook sent out expeditionary parties in small boats to examine arms of the sea, but he soon discovered that the time was wasted in searching for a passage in a quarter that promised so little success. The expedition was now about five hundred and twenty leagues to the westward of any part of Baffin's and Hudson's Bays, and the explorer concluded that if there were any passage, it should be to the north of latitude  $72^{\circ}$ .

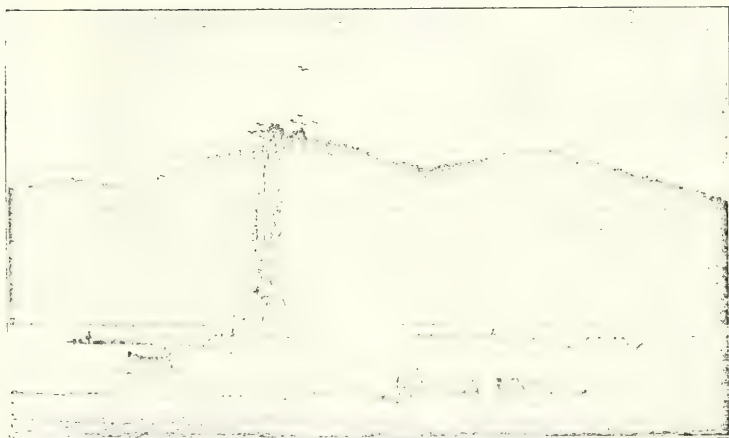
Cook left Point Hinchinbroke early in the morning of Monday, May 18th, on a northern course, discovering and naming islands on







ICY BAY AND MOUNT ST. ELIAS



THE NEW EDDYSTONE, IN BHEM'S CANAL



the way; he finally anchored at 8 o'clock in the evening of the 19th in the channel between Montagu and Green Islands, about two miles from the latter. The inlet which he had left on the 19th was named Prince William Sound, and Cook considered it remarkable concerning the inhabitants thereof, that having articles in their possession, presumably supplied them by Europeans, "they should, in return, never have given to the more inland Indians any of their sea-otter skins; which would certainly have been seen, sometime or other, about Hudson's Bay. But, as far as I know that is not the case; and the only method of accounting for this, must be by taking in consideration the very great distance, which, though it might not prevent European goods coming so far, as being so uncommon, might prevent the skins, which are a common article, from passing through more than two or three different tribes, who might use them for their own clothing; and send others, which they esteemed less valuable, as being of their own animals, Eastward, till they reach the traders from Europe."

From Prince William Sound, Cook steered to the southwest, and in latitude  $59^{\circ} 10'$  he discovered a lofty promontory, which he named Cape Elizabeth, and Cape Douglas was found in latitude  $58^{\circ} 56'$ . But the capes, bays, and islands discovered and named by Cook are too numerous to have a place in a work of this scope. It is sufficient to know that he continued his voyage southward until he reached and anchored his vessels in Karakakooa Bay, Sandwich Islands, in January, 1779, where, in untoward and sad circumstances, the great navigator lost his life. The details of this fatality are given at length by Lieutenant James King, who at the same time pays a high tribute to the character and services of Captain Cook, whose loss was universally deplored. After giving an account of the preparations made for the repairing of the *Resolution's* foremast, the heel of which was found "exceedingly rotten," Lieutenant King continues:

"As these repairs were likely to take up several days, Mr. Bayly and myself, got the astronomical apparatus on shore and pitched our tents on the *Morai*; having with us a guard of a corporal and six marines. We renewed our friendly correspondence with the priests, who, for the greater security of the workmen and their tools, *tabooed* the place where the mast lay, sticking their wands round it as before. The sailmakers were also sent on shore to repair the damages which



had taken place in their department during the late gales. They were lodged in a house adjoining the *Morai*, that was lent us by the priests. Such were our arrangements on shore. I shall now proceed to the account of those other transactions with the natives, which led, by degrees, to the fatal catastrophe of the 14th.

"Upon coming to anchor, we were surprized to find our reception very different from what it had been on our first arrival; no shouts, no bustle, no confusion; but a solitary bay, with only here and there a canoe stealing close along shore. The impulse of curiosity, which had before operated to so great a degree, might now indeed be supposed to have ceased; but the hospitable treatment we had invariably met with, and the friendly footing on which we parted, gave us some reason to expect, that they would again have flocked about us with great joy, on our return.

"We were forming various conjectures upon the occasion of this extraordinary appearance, when our anxiety was at length relieved by the return of a boat, which had been sent on shore, and brought us word that Terreeoboo was absent, and had left the bay under the *taboo*. Though this account appeared very satisfactory to most of us; yet others were of the opinion, or rather, perhaps, have been led, by subsequent events, to imagine, that there was something, at this time, very suspicious in the behaviour of the natives; and that the interdiction of all intercourse with us, on pretence of the King's absence, was only to give him time to consult with his Chiefs, in what manner it might be proper to treat us. Whether these suspicions were well founded, or the account given by the natives was the truth, we were never able to ascertain. For though it is not improbable, that our sudden return, for which they could see no apparent cause, and the necessity of which we afterward found it very difficult to make them comprehend, might occasion some alarm; yet the unsuspicious conduct of Terreeoboo, who, on his supposed arrival, the next morning, came immediately to visit Captain Cook, and the consequent return of the natives to their former friendly intercourse with us, are strong proofs that they neither meant, nor apprehended, any change of conduct.

"In support of this opinion, I may add the account of another accident, precisely of the same kind, which happened to us on our first visit, the day before the arrival of the King. A native had sold a hog on board the *Resolution*, and taken the price agreed on,



when Pareea, passing by, advised the man not to part with the hog, without an advanced price. For this, he was sharply spoken to, and pushed away; and the *taboo* being soon after laid on the bay, we had at first no doubt but that it was in consequence of the offence given to the Chief. Both these accidents serve to show, how very difficult it is to draw any certain conclusion from the actions of people, with whose customs, as well as language, we are so imperfectly acquainted; at the same time, some idea may be formed from them of the difficulties, at the first view, perhaps, not very apparent, which those have to encounter who, in all their transactions with these strangers, have to steer their course amidst so much uncertainty, where a trifling error may be attended with even the most fatal consequences. However true or false our conjectures may be, things went on in their usual quiet course till the afternoon of the 13th.

"Toward evening of that day, the officer who commanded the watering-party of the *Discovery*, came to inform me that several Chiefs had assembled at the well near the beach, driving away the natives, whom he had hired to assist the sailors in rolling down the casks to the shore. He told me, at the same time, that he thought their behaviour extremely suspicious, and that they meant to give him some farther disturbance. At his request, therefore, I sent a marine along with him, but suffered him to take only his side arms. In a short time the officer returned, and on his acquainting me that the islanders had armed themselves with stones, and were grown very tumultuous, I went myself to the spot, attended by a marine, with his musket. Seeing us approach, they threw away their stones, and, on my speaking to some of the Chiefs, the mob were driven away, and those who chose it, were suffered to assist in filling the casks. Having left things quiet here, I went to meet Captain Cook, whom I saw coming on shore, in the pinnace. I related to him what had just passed; and he ordered me, in case of their beginning to throw stones, or behave insolently, immediately to fire a ball at the offenders. I accordingly gave orders to the corporal to have the pieces of the sentinels loaded with ball, instead of small shot.

"Soon after our return to the tents, we were alarmed by a continued fire of muskets from the *Discovery*, which we observed to be directed at a canoe that we saw paddling toward the shore, in great haste, pursued by one of our small boats. We immediately concluded that the firing was in consequence of some theft, and Captain Cook





ordered me to follow him with a marine armed, and to endeavour to seize the people, as they came on shore. Accordingly, we ran toward the place where we supposed the canoe would land, but were too late; the people having quitted it, and made their escape into the country before our arrival.

"We were at this time ignorant, that the goods had been already restored; and as we thought it probable, from the circumstances we had at first observed, that they might be of importance, were unwilling to relinquish our hopes of recovering them. Having therefore inquired of the natives, which way the people had fled, we followed them, till it was near dark, when judging ourselves to be about three miles from the tents, and suspecting, that the natives, who frequently encouraged us in the pursuit, were amusing us with false information, we thought it in vain to continue our search any longer, and returned to the beach.

"During our absence, a difference, of a more serious and unpleasant nature had happened. The officer, who had been sent in the small boat, and was returning on board, with the goods which had been restored, observing Captain Cook and me engaged in the pursuit of the offenders, thought it his duty to seize the canoe, which was left drawn up on the shore. Unfortunately, this canoe belonged to Pareea, who arriving at the same moment, from on board the *Discovery*, claimed his property, with many protestations of his innocence. The officer refusing to give it up, and being joined by the crew of the pinnace, which was waiting for Captain Cook, a scuffle ensued, in which Pareea was knocked down by a violent blow on the head with an oar. The natives, who were collected about the spot, and had hitherto been peaceable spectators, immediately attacked our people with such a shower of stones, as forced them to retreat, with great precipitation, and swim off to a rock, at some distance from the shore. The pinnace was immediately ransacked by the islanders; and, but for the timely interposition of Pareea, who seemed to have recovered from the blow, and forgot it at the same instant, would soon have been entirely demolished. Having driven away the crowd, he made signs to our people that they might come and take possession of the pinnace, and that he would endeavour to get back the things which had been taken out of it. After their departure, he followed them in his canoe, with a midshipman's cap, and some other trifling articles of the plunder, and, with much ap-



parent concern at what had happened, asked if the *Orono* would kill him, and whether he would permit him to come on board the next day? On being assured that he should be well received, he joined noses (as their custom is) with the officers, in token of friendship, and paddled over to the village of Kowrowa.

"When Captain Cook was informed of what had passed, he expressed much uneasiness at it, and as we were returning on board, 'I am afraid,' said he, 'that these people will oblige me to use some violent measures; for,' he added, 'they must not be left to imagine, that they have gained an advantage over us.' However, as it was too late to take any steps this evening he contented himself with giving orders, that every man and woman on board should be immediately turned out of the ship. As soon as this order was executed, I returned on shore; and our former confidence in the natives being now much abated by the events of the day, I posted a double guard on the *Morai*, with orders to call me, if they saw any men lurking about the beach. At about 11 o'clock, five islanders were observed creeping round the bottom of the *Morai*; they seemed very cautious in approaching us, and, at last, finding themselves discovered, retired out of sight. About midnight, one of them venturing up close to the observatory, the sentinel fired over him; on which the man fled, and we passed the remainder of the night without farther disturbance.

"Next morning, at daylight, I went on board the *Resolution* for the time-keeper, and, in my way, was hailed by the *Discovery*, and informed, that their cutter had been stolen, during the night, from the buoy where it was moored.

"When I arrived on board I found the marines arming and Captain Cook loading his double-barrelled gun. Whilst I was relating to him what had happened to us in the night, he interrupted me, with some eagerness, and acquainted me with the loss of the *Discovery's* cutter, and with the preparations he was making for its recovery. It had been his usual practice, whenever anything of consequence was lost, at any of the islands in this ocean, to get the King, or some of the principal *Erees*, on board, and to keep them as hostages till it was restored. This method, which had been always attended with success, he meant to pursue on the present occasion; and, at the same time, had given orders to stop all the canoes that should attempt to leave the bay, with an intention of seizing and destroying them, if he could not recover the cutter by peaceable



means. Accordingly, the boats of both ships, well manned and armed, were stationed across the bay; and, before I left the ship, some great guns had been fired at two large canoes, that were attempting to make their escape.

"It was between 7 and 8 o'clock when we quitted the ship together; Captain Cook in the pinnace, having Mr. Phillips, and nine marines with him; and myself in the small boat. The last orders I received from him were, to quiet the minds of the natives, on our side of the bay, by assuring them, they would not be hurt; to keep my people together, and to be on my guard. We then parted; the Captain went toward Kowrowa, where the King resided; and I proceeded to the beach. My first care, on going ashore, was to give strict orders to the marines to remain within the tent, to load their pieces with ball, and not to quit their arms. Afterward I took a walk to the huts of old Kaoo, and the priests, and explained to them, as well as I could, the object of the hostile preparations, which had exceedingly alarmed them. I found, that they had already heard of the cutter's being stolen, and I assured them, that though Captain Cook was resolved to recover it, and to punish the authors of the theft, yet that they, and the people of the village on our side, need not be under the smallest apprehension of suffering any evil from us. I desired the priests to explain this to the people, and to tell them not to be alarmed, but to continue peaceable and quiet. Kaoo asked me, with great earnestness, if Terreeoboo was to be hurt? I assured him he was not; and both he and the rest of his brethren seemed much satisfied with this assurance.

"In the meantime, Captain Cook, having called off the launch, which was stationed at the north point of the bay, and taken it along with him, proceeded to Kowrowa, and landed with the Lieutenant and nine marines. He immediately marched into the village, where he was received with the usual marks of respect; the people prostrating themselves before him, and bringing their accustomed offerings of small hogs. Finding that there was no suspicion of his design, his next step was to inquire for Terreeoboo, and the two boys, his sons, who had been his constant guests on board the *Resolution*. In a short time, the boys returned along with the natives, who had been sent in search of them, and immediately led Captain Cook to the house where the King had slept. They found the old man just awoke from sleep; and, after a short conversation about the loss of the cutter,



from which Captain Cook was convinced that he was in no wise privy to it, he invited him to return in the boat, and spend the day on board the *Resolution*. To this proposal the King readily consented, and immediately got up to accompany him.

"Things were in this prosperous train, the two boys being already in the pinnace, and the rest of the party having advanced near the water-side, when an elderly woman, called Kanee-kabareea, the mother of the boys, and one of the King's favourite wives, came after him, and with many tears, and entreaties, besought him not to go on board. At the same time, two chiefs, who came along with her, laid hold of him, and insisting that he should go no farther, forced him to sit down. The natives, who were collecting in prodigious numbers along the shore, and had probably been alarmed by the firing of the great guns, and the appearances of hostility in the bay, began to throng round Captain Cook and their King. In this situation, the Lieutenant of marines, observing that his men were huddled close together in the crowd, and thus incapable of using their arms, if any occasion should require it, proposed to the Captain, to draw them up along the rocks, close to the water's edge; and the crowd readily making way for them to pass, they were drawn up in a line at the distance of about thirty yards from the place where the King was sitting.

"All this time, the old King remained on the ground, with the strongest marks of terror and dejection in his countenance; Captain Cook, not willing to abandon the object for which he had come on shore, continuing to urge him, in the most pressing manner, to proceed; whilst, on the other hand, whenever the King appeared inclined to follow him, the chiefs, who stood round him, interposed, at first with prayers and entreaties, but afterward, having recourse to force and violence, insisted on his staying where he was. Captain Cook therefore finding that the alarm had spread too generally, and that it was in vain to think any longer of getting him off, without bloodshed, at last gave up the point; observing to Mr. Phillips, that it would be impossible to compel him to go on board without the risk of killing a great number of the inhabitants.

"Though the enterprise, which had carried Captain Cook on shore had now failed, and was abandoned, yet his person did not appear to have been in the least danger, till an accident happened, which gave a fatal turn to the affair. The boats, which had been





stationed across the bay, having fired at some canoes, that were attempting to get out, unfortunately had killed a Chief of the first rank. The news of his death arrived at the village where Captain Cook was, just as he had left the King, and was walking slowly toward the shore. The ferment it occasioned was very conspicuous; the women and children were immediately sent off; and the men put on their war-mats and armed themselves with spears and stones. One of the natives, having in his hands a stone, and a long iron spike (which they call a *pabooa*) came up to the Captain, flourishing his weapon, by way of defiance, and threatening to throw the stone. The Captain desired him to desist; but the man, persisting in his insolence, he was at length provoked to fire a load of small shot. The man having his mat on, which the shot were not able to penetrate, this had no other effect than to irritate and encourage them. Several stones were thrown at the marines; and one of the *Erees* attempted to stab Mr. Phillips with his *pabooa*; but failed in the attempt, and received from him a blow with the butt end of his musket. Captain Cook now fired his second barrel, loaded with ball, and killed one of the foremost of the natives. A general attack with stones immediately followed, which was answered by a discharge of musketry from the marines and the people in the boats. The islanders, contrary to the expectations of every one, stood the fire with great firmness; and before the marines had time to reload, they broke in upon them with dreadful shouts and yells. What followed was a scene of the utmost horror and confusion.

"Four of the marines were cut off amongst the rocks in their retreat, and fell a sacrifice to the fury of the enemy; three more were dangerously wounded; and the Lieutenant, who had received a stab between the shoulders with a *pabooa*, having fortunately reserved his fire, shot the man who had wounded him just as he was going to repeat his blow. Our unfortunate Commander, the last time he was seen distinctly, was standing at the water's edge, and calling out to the boats to cease firing, and to pull in. If it be true, as some of those who were present have imagined, that the marines and boat-men had fired without his orders, and that he was desirous of preventing any further bloodshed, it is not improbable that his humanity, on this occasion, proved fatal to him. For it was remarked, that whilst he faced the natives, none of them had offered him any violence, but that, having turned about to give his orders to the boats, he was



stabbed in the back and fell with his face into the water. On seeing him fall, the islanders set up a great shout, and his body was immediately dragged on shore and surrounded by the enemy, who, snatching the dagger out of each other's hands, showed a savage eagerness to have a share in his destruction.

"Thus fell our great and excellent Commander! After a life of so much distinguished and successful enterprise, his death, as far as regards himself, cannot be reckoned premature; since he lived to finish the great work for which he seems to have been designed; and was rather removed from the enjoyment than cut off from the acquisition, of glory. How sincerely his loss was felt and lamented, by those who had so long found their general security in his skill and conduct, and every consolation, under their hardships, in his tenderness and humanity, it is neither necessary nor possible for me to describe; much less shall I attempt to paint the horror with which we were struck, and the universal dejection and dismay, which followed so dreadful and unexpected a calamity."

Lieutenant King concludes his eulogy with a brief summary of Captain Cook's achievements in the cause of science, observing:

"Perhaps no science ever received greater additions from the labours of a single man, than geography has done from those of Captain Cook. In his first voyage to the South Seas, he discovered the Society Islands; determined the insularity of New Zealand; discovered the straits which separate the two islands, and are called after his name; and made a complete survey of both. He afterward explored the Eastern coast of New Holland, hitherto unknown; an extent of twenty-seven degrees of latitude, or upward of two thousand miles.

"In his second expedition, he resolved the great problem of a Southern continent; having traversed that hemisphere between the latitudes of  $40^{\circ}$  and  $70^{\circ}$ , in such a manner, as not to leave a possibility of its existence, unless near the pole, and out of the reach of navigation. During this voyage, he discovered New Caledonia, the largest island in the Southern Pacific, except New Zealand; the island of Georgia; and an unknown coast, which he named Sandwich Land, the *thule* of the Southern hemisphere; and having twice visited the tropical seas, he settled the situations of the old, and made several new discoveries.

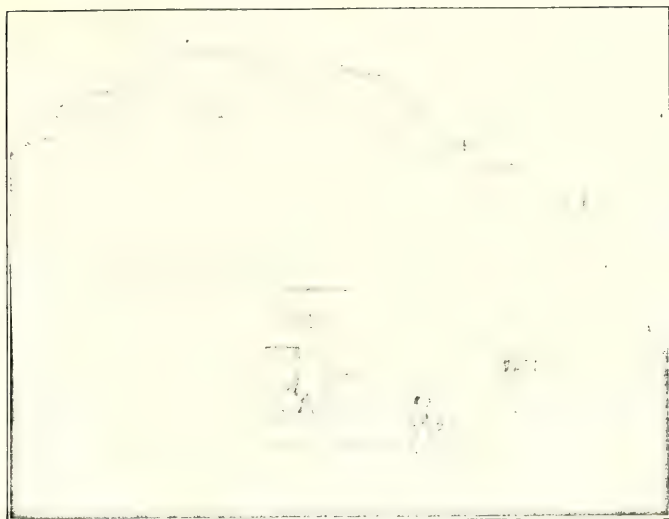


"But the voyage we are now relating, is distinguished, above all the rest, by the extent and importance of its discoveries. Besides several smaller islands in the Southern Pacific, he discovered, to the North of the equinoctial line, the group called the Sandwich Islands; which, from their situation and productions, bid fairer for becoming an object of consequence, in the system of European navigation, than any other discovery in the South Sea. He afterward explored what had hitherto remained unknown of the western coast of America, from the latitude of  $43^{\circ}$  to  $70^{\circ}$  North, containing an extent of three thousand, five hundred miles; ascertained the proximity of the two great continents of Asia and America; passed the straits between them, and surveyed the coast, on each side, to such a height of Northern latitude as to demonstrate the impracticability of a passage, in that hemisphere, from the Atlantic into the Pacific Ocean, either by an eastern or a western course. In short, if we except the sea of Amur, and the Japanese Archipelago, which still remain imperfectly known to Europeans, he has completed the hydrography of the habitable globe."

The lamentable death of Captain Cook has been described by Lieutenant King. In his narrative of the expedition after that calamity, King goes on to state that after much parleying and difficulty with the natives, some of the bones of his commander were recovered, wrapped up in a cloth. Other parts were brought to the *Resolution*, done up in a quantity of fine white cloth, covered with white feathers. The body had been dismembered by the natives, and the flesh from each part cut off and burned. As trophies of their barbarous act, the principal chiefs each had received one of the bones, and to recover them, Captain Clerke was compelled to make a display of force. In fact, several of the natives were killed and many of their houses burned to the ground before he gained his end. All that remained of Cook, the intrepid and famous navigator, was placed in a casket and committed to the deep, with military honours.

On the evening of February 22, 1779, the expedition, under command of Captain Clerke, left the harbour of "Kowrowa," where Cook was killed, and after having reached the latitude of  $69^{\circ} 34'$  north, where solid fields of ice were encountered, Clerke "took a last farewell of a northeast passage to Old England." Then the expedition was headed south, and finally, on the 4th day of October, 1780, the ships arrived at the Nore after an absence from England of four years, two





BIRTHPLACE OF CAPTAIN JAMES COOK  
Marton, near Middlesborough, Yorkshire, England



THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN JAMES COOK  
From an engraving in the Royal United Service Museum





months and twenty days. The main object, it is scarcely necessary to relate, had not been accomplished; but the heroic navigators and explorers took every advantage of their opportunities, and, through their invaluable services, added greatly to the renown, prestige and possessions of Great Britain. The commanders of the *Resolution* and *Discovery*, however, never returned. The life of Cook was suddenly cut short at the Sandwich Islands, and that of his successor, Captain Clerke, who had commanded the *Discovery*, was ended by that dread disease, consumption, on the 22d of August, 1779, while in the latitude of  $53^{\circ} 7'$  north.

The great navigator was of humble origin. He was born at Marston in the North Riding of York, the 27th of October, 1728. At the age of eighteen he joined the merchant service, but later entered the Royal Navy as a volunteer in the capacity of an able seaman. His diligence, sobriety and strict attention to his duties soon brought him to the notice of his commanding officers, and by degrees he was promoted through different ranks until 1757 he secured a master's warrant. While in the line-of-battle H. M. S. *Pembroke* on the North American station, he carefully surveyed the St. Lawrence before the famous battle of the Plains of Abraham. Later he surveyed parts of the coasts of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland to the satisfaction of his Captain and the Governor of that Colony, both of whom conceived a high opinion of his abilities. A year or two later, in 1768, Cook was given command of the expedition to the Pacific to observe the transit of Venus. At the same time he received his Lieutenant's commission. The voyage was successful, and upon his return to England in 1771 he was gazetted a commander. In the following year he sailed from England in the *Resolution*, accompanied by the *Adventure*, upon his great Australasian enterprise. This voyage attracted such favourable attention that he was promoted to post captain, the King himself placing the commission in the explorer's hands. Then followed the voyage, of which a brief description has been given. Perhaps not the least of the benefits he conferred upon humanity was his discovery of a method to preserve health at sea. Before his voyages, that terrible bane of seamen, the scurvy, demanded its toll of lives from each vessel that embarked upon a protracted voyage. Cook, by the exercise of a humane foresight, robbed the disease of its terrors.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> See Dictionary of Natural Biography; Walbran, British Columbia Coast Names.



Of the men who sailed with Cook upon his second and third voyages, several afterwards became more or less closely identified with the affairs of the northwest coast. Vancouver, Roberts, Colnett and Hergest, were midshipmen; Portlock a master's mate, and Dixon an armorer. John Ledyard, of whom more later, also sailed with Cook.

Perhaps it may not be out of place to insert at the end of this chapter the last letter written by Captain Cook to the Admiralty. The letter bears the inscription: "*Resolution* at the Island of Unalaschka on the Coast of America in the Latitude of  $53^{\circ} 55'$  North, Longitude  $192^{\circ} 30'$  East from Greenwich, the 20th of October 1778."

It reads:

"Sir, Having accidentally met with some Russians who have promised to put this in a way of being sent to Petersburg, and I neither have nor intent to visit Kamtschatka as yet, I take this opportunity to give their Lordships a short account of my proceedings from leaving the Cape of Good Hope to this time.

"After leaving the Cape, I, pursuant to their Lordships Instructions, visited the Islands lately seen by the French, situated between the Latitude of  $48^{\circ} 41'$  and  $50^{\circ}$  South and in the Longitude of  $69\frac{1}{2}$  Et. These Islands abound with good Harbours and fresh water, but produceth neither Tree nor Shrub and but very little of any other kind of vegetation. After spending five days on the Coast thereof, I quitted it on the 30th of December, just touched at Van Diemen's Land, arrived at Queen Charlotte's Sound in New Zealand the 13th February 1777. Left it again on the 25th and pushed for Otaheite, but as we had not been long at sea before we met with an Easterly wind which continued so long that the season was too far spent to proceed to the North that year, and at length the want of water and food for the Cattle I had on board obliged me to bear away for the Friendly Islands, so that it was August before I arrived at Otaheite. I found that the Spaniards from Callao had been twice at this Island from the time of my leaving it in 1774. The first time they came they left behind them designedly, four Spaniards who remained upon the Island about two months, but were all gone some time before my arrival. They had also brought to and left on the Island, Goats, Hogs, and Dogs, one Bull, and a Ram, but never a female of either of these species, so that those I carried and put on shore there were highly acceptable. They consisted of a Bull



and three Cows, a Ram and five ewes, besides Poultry of four sorts, and a Horse and a Mare with Omai's. At the Friendly Isles I left a Bull and a Cow, a Horse and Mare, and some sheep. In which I flatter myself that the laudable intentions of the King and their Lordships have been answered.

"I left Omai at Huaheine, quitted the Society Isles the 9th of December, proceeded to the North and in the Latitude of  $22^{\circ}$  N., Longitude  $200^{\circ}$  East, fell in with a Groupe of Islands inhabited by the same Nation as Otaheite and abounding with Hogs and Roots. After a short stay at these Islands, continued our Route for the Coast of America, which we made on the 7th of last March, and on the 29th, after enduring several storms, got into a Port in the Latitude of  $49\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  North. At this place, besides taking in Wood and Water, the *Resolution* was supplied with a new Mizen-Mast, Fore-Topmast, and her Fore-Mast got out and repaired.

"I put to Sea again the 26th April, and was no sooner out of Port, than we were attacked by a violent Storm which was the occasion of so much of the Coast being passed unseen. In this Gale the *Resolution* sprang a Leak which obliged me to put into a Port in the Latitude of  $61^{\circ}$ , Longitude  $213^{\circ}$  East. In a few days I was again at Sea, and soon found we were on a Coast where every step was to be considered, where no information could be had from Maps either Modern or Ancient; confiding too much in the former we were frequently misled to our no small hindrance.

"On an extensive Coast altogether unknown, it may be thought needless to say that we met with many obstructions before we got through the Narrow Strait that divides Asia from America, where the Coast of the latter takes a N. E. direction. I followed it flattered with the hopes of having at last overcome all difficulties, when on the 17th of August in the Latitude  $70^{\circ} 45'$ , Longitude  $198^{\circ}$  East, we were stopped by an impenetrable body of Ice and had so far advanced between it and the land before we discovered it that little was wanting to force us on shore.

"Finding I could no longer proceed along the Coast I tried what could be done further out, but the same obstacle everywhere presented itself, quite over to the Coast of Asia which we made on the 29th of the same month in the Latitude of  $68^{\circ} 55'$ , Longitude  $180\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  East. As frost and snow, the forerunners of Winter began



to set in, it was thought too late in the Season to make a further Attempt for a Passage this Year in any direction, I therefore steered to the S. E. along the Coast of Asia, passed the Strait above mentioned and then stood over for the American Coast to clear up some doubts and to search, but in vain, for a Harbour to compleat our wood and water. Wood is a very scarce article in all these Northern parts; except in one place there is none upon the Sea Coast but what is thrown ashore by the Sea, some of which we got on board and then proceeded to this place where we had been before to take in Water. From here I intend to proceed to the Sandwich Islands, that is those discovered in  $22^{\circ}$  North Latitude, after refreshing there, return to the North by the way of Kamtschatka, and the ensuing summer make another and final attempt to find a Northern Passage, but I must confess I have little hopes of succeeding; Ice, though an obstacle not easily surmounted is perhaps not the only one in the way. The Coasts of the two Continents is flat for some distance off and even in the middle between the two the depth of Water is inconsiderable; this, and some other circumstances all tending to prove that there is more land in the Frozen Sea than as yet we know of, where the Ice has its source and that the polar part is far from being an open Sea.

"There is another discouraging circumstance attending the Navigating these Northern parts, and that is the want of Harbours where a ship can occasionally retire to secure herself from the Ice or repair any damage she may have sustained. For a more particular description of the American Coast, I beg leave to refer to the enclosed Chart which is hastily copied from an original of the same scale.

"The reason of my not going to the Harbour of St. Peter and St. Paul in Kamtschatka to spend the winter is the great dislike I have to lay inactive for six or eight months while so large a part of the Southern Pacific Ocean remains unexplored and the State and Condition of the Ships will allow me to be moving. Sickness has been little felt in the ships and Scurvy not at all. I have however had the misfortune to lose Mr. Anderson, my Surgeon, who died of a lingering consumption two months ago, and one man some time before of the Dropsy, and Captain Clerke had one drowned by accident, which are all we have lost since we left the Cape of Good Hope.





"Stores and Provisions we have enough for twelve months, and longer, without a supply of both it will hardly be possible for us to remain in these Seas, but whatever time we do remain shall be spent in the improvement of Geography and Navigation by

"Sir, your most obedient  
and most humble Servant

"James Cook."



## CHAPTER VI

### THE MARITIME FURTRADERS

The latter half of the eighteenth century, like that of the sixteenth, exhibited great enterprise in the discovery of new lands, and commercial activity in the extension of trade to the distant and then little known parts of the world. But unlike the earlier period, when the eyes of the great merchant adventurers of England were turned almost entirely to the eastern shores of North America, and the discovery of a passage by the North West through the Frozen Sea to the supposed Eldorado of the great Southern Ocean, attention had become centred upon the more recently discovered islands of the South Pacific and the valuable fur trade carried on between China and the storm and mist bound coasts of North West America. The merchants of almost every important seaport in the kingdom, in friendly rivalry to the numerous government expeditions, vied with each other in fitting out ships under the command of skilled seamen, of whom there was no lack. Trade was the primary object, of course, but all or nearly all of these private expeditions were fortified with instructions that no opportunity was to be lost of making fresh discoveries of new islands or continents, which might bring honour and wealth to themselves and add lustre to the vast and rapidly extending Empire.

It must not be thought, however, that British merchants were the only ones to seek honour and fortune in the new field. On the contrary, from the very beginning they met with vigorous competition from the adventurers of other nations, the enterprising traders of the United States of America, who carried the flag of their nation into all seas, being notably active in their opposition. It is just such commercial and exploring expeditions as these that are now to come under review. They accomplished a great deal, and added not a little to the complicated international disputes of a later day respect-



ing the territorial jurisdictions of the several countries concerned in the division of North West America.

The student of history will be familiar with the manner in which one era is succeeded by another. A movement, fraught with far-reaching consequences, and bringing in its train a whole assortment of political and economic changes, may at first attract but little attention. Then by degrees it grows and gathers momentum until a new power is born that with irresistible force sweeps aside old ideas and pre-conceived notions. Again a sudden acquisition of knowledge from one source or another may cause a revolutionary change of attitude towards a theory or a country. Even so it was with the vast and hitherto unknown region of North West America. Captain Cook had set out to solve the great geographical problem of the age, but, strange to say, it was not so much his contribution to the solution of that problem as his discovery of a country rich in fur that invited public attention to his third and last voyage. It is an ironical comment upon the ambition of man that it often happens that chance discoveries—the by-product of scientific investigation—exercise a more potent influence in the affairs of the world than the results of years of laborious research.

In the course of their protracted visit to Nootka Sound and Alaska, the officers and men of the *Resolution* and *Discovery* frequently bartered with the natives for the furs in which these coasts then abounded, giving in exchange therefor pieces of metal and trinkets of small value. The men had no idea at all of the worth of the skins and used them as bed clothes, or for other odd purposes. Sometimes they even patched their jackets and breeches or kilts with the costly fur of the sea-otter. Naturally enough, after such hard usage, many of the skins were in poor condition when the ships reached Macao on their homeward voyage. Nevertheless, the Chinese merchants of that port, to the great astonishment of the sailors, eagerly bargained for the remnants. One of the seamen sold his stock for no less than eight hundred dollars (Chinese); and a few prime skins which had been carefully preserved were sold for one hundred and twenty dollars apiece. "The whole amount of the value," says Lieutenant King, "in *specie* and goods, that was got for the furs, in both ships, I am confident, did not fall far short of two thousand pounds sterling; and it was generally supposed, that at least two-thirds of the quantity we have originally got from the



Americans, were spoiled and worn out, or had been given away, and otherwise disposed of, in Kamtschatka." Lieutenant King concludes his remarks with the significant observation that "the advantages that might be derived from a voyage to that part of the American coast, undertaken with commercial views, appear to me of a degree of importance sufficient to call for the attention of the Public."

In spite of their long and arduous voyage, the crews of the *Resolution* and *Discovery* wished to return at once to Cook's Inlet to purchase more skins. In fact Lieutenant King goes so far as to say that "The rage with which our seamen were possessed to return to Cook's River . . . was not far short of mutiny." The commander himself was scarcely less excited than his men over the discovery of the high esteem in which the beautiful fur of the sea-otter was held by the wealthy merchants of Canton. He devotes two or three pages of his journal to a plan for establishing a fur-trade in the North Pacific, between the American coast and China, by means of the East-India Company, which still enjoyed its monopoly.

Before Captain Cook's expedition returned to England war had been declared between Great Britain and France and Spain. It was not considered, therefore, an opportune time for the publication of the results of the voyage. In 1783, however, the war was brought to an end by the treaty of Versailles and the monumental work on the great circumnavigator's scientific investigations appeared in the following year. It is not too much to say, perhaps, that with the appearance of these quarto volumes and their accompanying folio of charts and sketches, a new era dawned for the territories bordering on the North Pacific. It is true that an account of the voyage by the assistant surgeon, W. Ellis, had been printed in England in 1782, and a shorter one by John Ledyard in the United States in 1783, but neither of these books can be compared to the official edition, which is one of the great classics of the literature of British seamanship. The work was translated into many languages and reprinted in all of the leading countries of Europe.

Although the officers and men of the *Resolution* and *Discovery* were, by order of the Admiralty, enjoined to secrecy with regard to their discoveries on the Northwest Coast, and their diaries were taken from them as a further precaution in that direction, yet it seems that they did not keep the news to themselves. It would be too much to expect, perhaps, that the men should refrain from recounting their





adventures, in which the eagerness of the Chinese merchants to purchase the fur of the sea-otter played so important a part. They would have been more than human, if not even a whisper had escaped them upon such a fascinating subject. At any rate it is likely that before the famous volumes entitled "Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, undertaken by command of His Majesty, for making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere," were given to the world, the exploitation of the northwest coast had already become a topic of discussion amongst adventurers. It was not, however, until the official account of Cook's third and last voyage appeared in 1784 that the new field for commercial enterprise attracted world-wide attention. Then private enterprise conceived and carried into effect the commercial voyages which in the course of a few years gave a new direction to the affairs of the North Pacific. The operations of the furtraders not only added largely to the world's store of geographical knowledge by bringing an unknown region into prominence, but they also gave bone and sinew to the various contentions of Great Britain, Russia, Spain and the United States in the boundary disputes of a later period.

It may be as well at this point to define the region in which the furtraders carried on their operations and levied their tribute. The field extended from the coast of California in the south to the Alaskan posts of the Russians in the north, along a continuous coast line two thousand miles or more in length, of which the historian of British Columbia is more particularly concerned with that part which stretches from the mouth of the Columbia River to the Portland Canal. The southern part of this particular section of the seaboard is singularly devoid of headlands, harbours, and inlets, while the northern part of it is marked with peculiar and distinctive geographical features. From the mouth of the Columbia River to the entrance to the Straits of Juan de Fuca the coast extends in an almost unbroken line; but from that point to Cross Strait in Alaska the coast is deeply indented by a continuous succession of spacious inlets communicating with narrow fiords which run far into the continent.

There is another remarkable feature of the coast between the forty-eighth and fifty-ninth parallels of north latitude. The continental shore is effectually masked by groups of large and small islands which are threaded by a network of intricate channels and passages. These innumerable islands and inlets became the favourite



hunting ground of the furtrader, who poked the prow of his little vessel into every bay and harbour in his search for Indian villages from which might be obtained the furs he so greatly coveted. Thus the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Barkley Sound, Clayoquot Sound, Nootka Sound, Kyuquot Sound, Quatsino Sound, Queen Charlotte's Sound, Fitzhugh Sound, Millbank Sound, Chatham Sound, and Dixon Entrance soon became well-known. The long fiords and intricate channels to which the larger passages gave access, were also explored to some extent.

In fine, the Northwest Coast suddenly became the scene of a keen commercial rivalry, in the course of which the competitors suffered many hardships and braved many dangers, all for the sake of the rich fur of the sea-otter, so highly prized by the mandarins of China. Adventurers of many nations foregathered here to pit their wits against the native Indian and against each other. Nor was the trade conducted without loss of life and property. It is true that the natives were generally more or less amenable, nevertheless, many tragic incidents occurred before the sea-otter was extirpated in that quarter. The natives seized several vessels and in the literature of the Coast one may read the gruesome details of these incidents. The piratical attempts of the Indians, which it must be confessed were in some instances provoked by the callous behaviour of the fur-traders themselves, were followed by reprisals in which many natives were killed.

As the adventurer sailed up and down the coast he found harbours and anchorages, of which he drew rough charts for his own guidance, or for the information of his employers. His sketches, however, were not always calculated to throw light on the situation, for if the truth were told, the rival traders generally desired to keep to themselves the exact position of villages noted for their yield of skins. In the keen competition of those exciting days, the furtrader even went out of his way to mislead his competitors, a fact which is noted in John Meares' Voyage. Yet in spite of the petty rivalries of individuals and the haphazard method of procedure, the furtrading period was productive of a large assortment of local charts, which are interesting today because they reveal the movements of the merchant adventurers and their intimate knowledge of certain parts of the coast. The careful survey of Captain Vancouver, however, soon superseded the sporadic efforts of the individual and the maps of the



furtrader have long since been forgotten. But the charts gathered together and published from time to time by Alexander Dalrymple, hydrographer to the Admiralty, prove conclusively that the trader bore his part in the work of exploration. Captain Vancouver himself on more than one occasion acknowledged his indebtedness to the early adventurers.

While treating of the scene of the furtraders' feuds and activities, it should be mentioned that of the large islands which form so conspicuous a feature of the Northwest Coast, with the exception of Vancouver Island, none attracted so much attention as the Queen Charlotte Islands, so named at this time. The peculiarly prominent position of that important group naturally led to its early discovery and the immediate exploitation of its fur resources. Moresby, Graham, and Kunghit Islands proved a fruitful source of wealth, as is attested by the log of more than one vessel. The capes, bays, and inlets of the Queen Charlotte Islands bear mute testimony to the work of the furtrader, for many of them were named by him or in his honour. Likewise, the nomenclature of the continental coast and its fringe of islands recalls the stirring events of those early days. Indeed, the names bestowed by the furtrader upon the headlands, bays, and islands of the Northwest Coast serve to commemorate an extraordinarily active and intensely interesting era in the annals of that region. As a matter of fact, some scattered names, a few pamphlets and charts, and a smaller number of bulky volumes of exploration, are the only monuments to the prowess of the adventurer. Unregarded and forgotten as it now is, that prowess is memorable because it illustrates the indomitable spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race, and because it shows in a peculiarly instructive manner what the British Empire owes to private enterprise.

Owing to the great distance between European ports and the Northwest Coast, the earliest expedition started from China, and it is a fact of some interest that that country was brought into touch with North America by means of the furtrade. China afforded the most lucrative market for the furs obtained on the American coast and Chinese sailors and artisans were employed on some of the vessels. Several expeditions sailed from Canton and Macao. Before long, however, the shipping houses of the leading British ports, notably London and Bristol, and some of the merchants of the Atlantic seaports of the United States, particularly those of the Port of Boston,





*Blyth*

Engraved by Riddler, from an original drawing by John Brown.





determined to exploit the new field. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century many ships sailed from Great Britain and from the New England States for the North Pacific.

The first expedition to the region under discussion sailed from China under Captain James Hanna, who commanded a small brig of sixty tons, carrying a crew of thirty men. The brig left the Typa in April, 1785, and reached Nootka in August of the same year. Captain George Dixon is the authority for the statement that soon after the arrival of the brig at Nootka the natives attempted to board her in open day. In the fray that followed many of the natives were killed. Apparently this lesson was not lost upon the Nootkans, for they afterwards traded quietly and peaceably. It is said that Captain Hanna procured a valuable cargo of furs, though his profits are not known. He left Nootka towards the end of September and reached Macao in December. The furs were sold at Canton in March, 1786, for a little more than \$20,000. So it may be reckoned that the first trading voyage was successful. The accounts of the venture are so meagre that it is difficult to say exactly what places were visited by Captain Hanna. Apparently he did most of his trading at or in the vicinity of Nootka.

While Captain Hanna's voyage of 1785 is the first of which there is any authentic record, it was not the first to be proposed. Captain Dixon of the *Queen Charlotte* relates that as early as the year 1781—Cook's expedition returned in 1780—one William Bolts fitted out the *Cobenzell*, an armed ship of seven hundred tons, for the Northwest Coast of America. According to the arrangements made, she was to have sailed from Trieste, accompanied by a tender of forty-five tons. The vessel was fitted out for both trade and discovery. Men of high scientific attainments were engaged for the expedition and the courts of Europe were approached with a view of securing a safe pass-port for these vessels and a good reception at foreign ports. Unfortunately, the venture was "overturned by a set of interested men, then in power at Vienna." Portlock and Dixon's veiled allusions to this expedition contain all the published information on the subject.

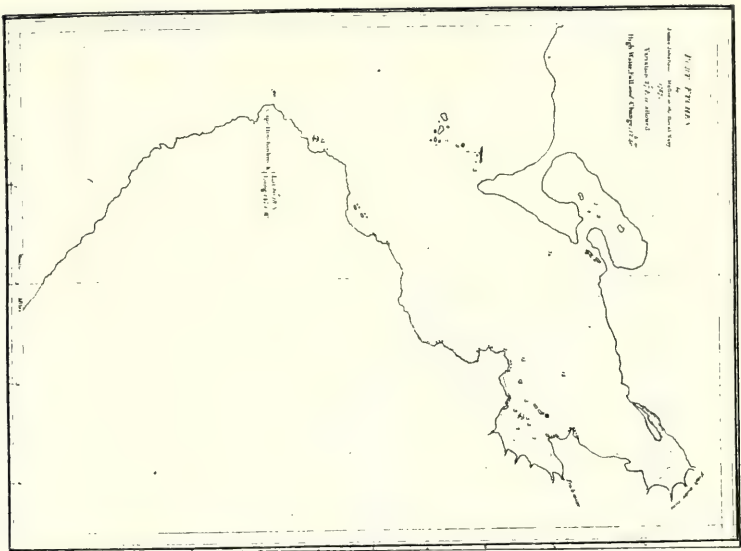
In May, 1786, Captain Hanna again sailed from Macao, this time in the *Sea Otter*, of one hundred and twenty tons. He reached Nootka Sound in August, only to find that he had been preceded by Captain Lowrie and Captain Guise, in command of the *Captain Cook* of three hundred tons and the snow *Experiment* of one hundred tons, fitted



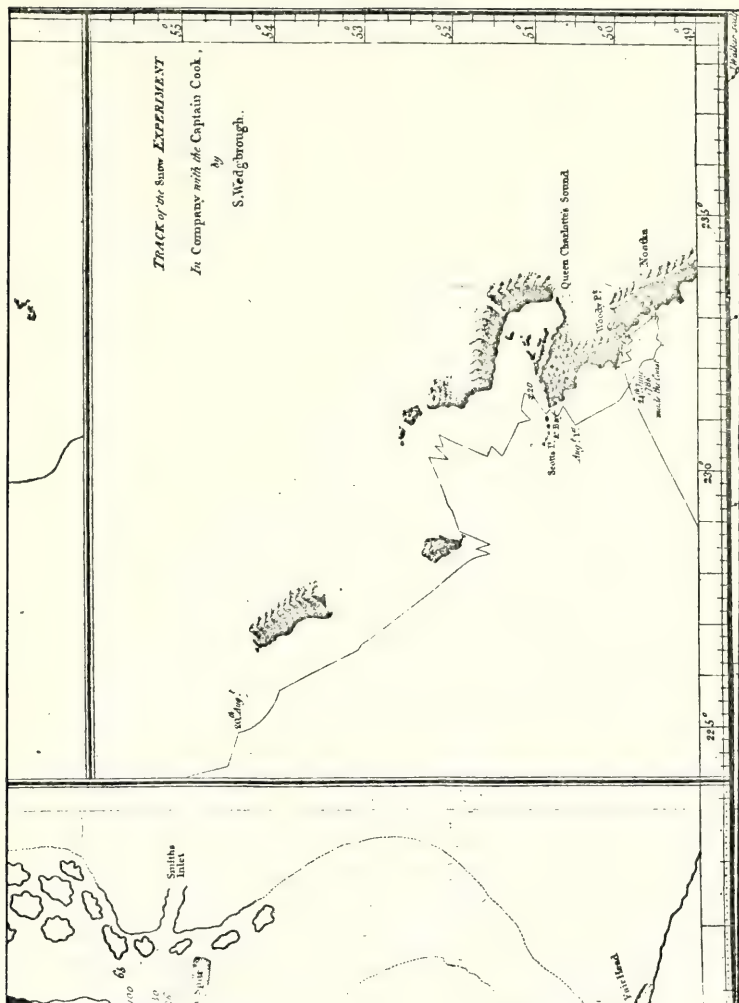
out in Bombay. These vessels reached Nootka towards the end of June, 1786, proceeding thence to Prince William Sound. After a short stay there Lowrie and Guise sailed for Macao. Hanna's second venture was not by any means so profitable as his first, for upon this occasion he procured but one hundred whole sea-otter skins and three hundred odd pieces. The furs were sold at Macao on the 8th of February, 1787, for eight thousand dollars, a poor return upon the time and money invested in the enterprise.

Lowrie and Guise were more successful, obtaining six hundred and four skins and odd pieces of fur, which fetched \$24,000 in China, or an average of forty dollars each. Apparently nearly all of the skins were obtained at Nootka. John M'Key, the surgeon of the expedition, was left at that port for the purpose of recruiting his health and "to learn the language and to ingratiate himself with the natives so that if any other vessels should touch there he might prevent them from purchasing any furs." M'Key, as far as is known, was the first European to live among the Indians of the Northwest Coast for any length of time. Hanna found him here and offered him a passage in the *Sea Otter*, which he refused, on the score that he had begun to relish dried fish and whale oil, and was so satisfied with the life that he was perfectly contented to stay until the following year. M'Key soon had cause to regret his decision, however, for no sooner had Captain Hanna left the Sound than the natives stripped him of his clothes and forced him to adopt "their mode of dress and filthiness of manners." From the accounts of the episode which have survived, it appears that he was an apt pupil. Mr. Etches, of whom more will be heard presently, told Captain Dixon that M'Key "was equally slovenly and dirty with the filthiest of them all." In the course of his sojourn at Nootka this eccentric man is said to have mastered the native language and gained an intimate knowledge of the temper and disposition of the natives, which presently served him in good stead. It is worth remembering that M'Key penetrated the country behind Nootka Sound, and that from the reports of the natives and the knowledge he had gathered on his several excursions he came to the conclusion that no part of the Nootka Sound country "was the continent of America, but a chain of detached islands." Apparently, the Indians were aware of the insular character of their country, a fact which was not established by Europeans until the year 1792, when Captain Vancouver circumnavigated the large island













which he named Quadra and Vancouver to commemorate his conference with Senor Bodega y Quadra at Nootka Sound. It is only fair to add that it is recorded in Dixon's voyage that Etches averred that no great dependence could be placed on M'Key's story, as he was "a very ignorant young fellow," but in the light of later events there seems no reason to distrust M'Key on this point. At any rate, his story is interesting, because no doubt it helped to inspire John Meares' "butter pat map," the history of which will be recorded presently.

Another expedition of this early period was that of Captain Peters in the *Lark*, a snow of two hundred and twenty tons and a crew of forty men. The expedition sailed from Macao in July, 1786, with orders to make the Northwest Coast by way of Kamchatka. Captain Peters' voyage ended disastrously, for the vessel was lost on Copper Island, only two of the crew being saved.

Of the earliest expeditions, that commanded by Captain Barkley of the British trading ship *Imperial Eagle* is deserving of more than passing notice. Captain Walbran, in his valuable work "British Columbia Coast Names," gives a brief but interesting account of this expedition. The *Imperial Eagle*, formerly the East India-man *Loudoun*, a fine vessel of four hundred tons, ship-rigged and mounting twenty guns, sailed under Austrian colours to obviate the necessity of procuring a license from the East India Company, which, under the provisions of its charter that corporation had the right to demand from British merchants. Captain Barkley, who was only twenty-five years of age, had invested three thousand pounds in the venture. The ship sailed from the Thames in August, 1786, for Ostend, where she hoisted the Austrian colours. Here Captain Barkley met and married Miss Frances Hornby Trevor, then seventeen years of age. Mrs. Barkley, who accompanied her husband, was the first white woman to visit the Northwest Coast. Her lively and entertaining diary, which has been preserved to this day, is an important source of historical information. Captain Barkley arrived at Nootka Sound in June, 1787, where a large number of sea-otter skins were soon obtained, largely through the aforesaid M'Key's assistance.

On leaving Nootka Captain Barkley entered and named Barkley Sound, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Frances and Hornby Peaks were so called after his wife, Cape Beale after the purser of the *Imperial Eagle*, and the young commander also named



many other places in this great inlet. Of these names, "Cape Beale" and "Barkley Sound" are the only ones to be found on modern maps.

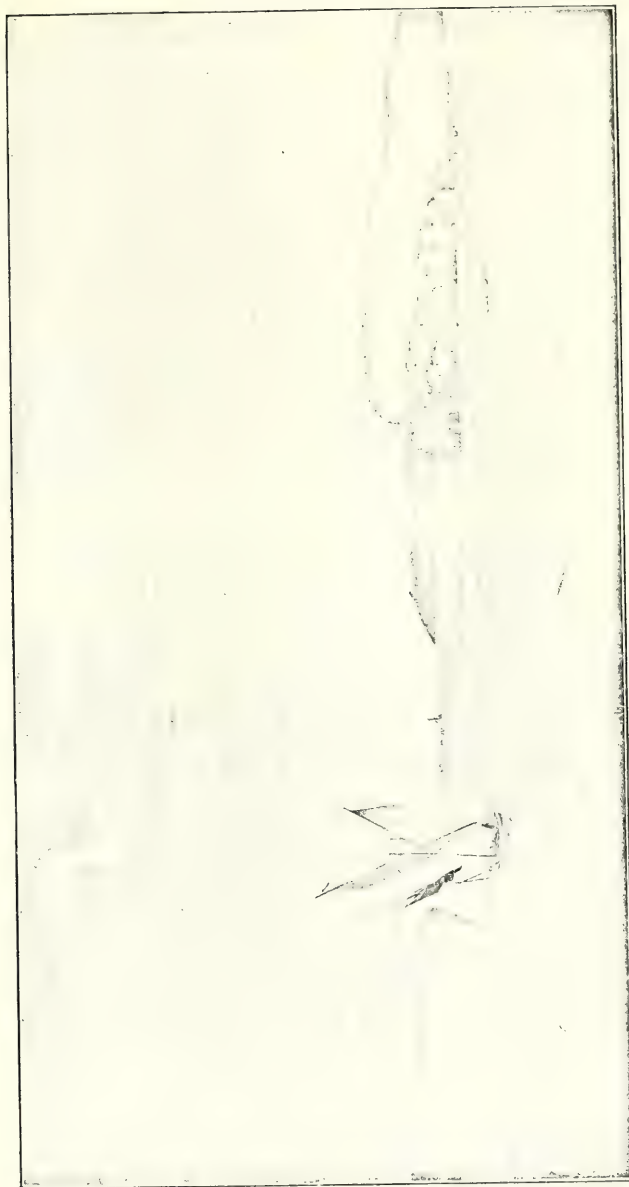
Continuing his voyage in a southeasterly direction Captain Barkley made an important discovery, aptly described by Mrs. Barkley as "A large opening extending to the eastward, the entrance of which appeared to be about four leagues wide and remained about that width as far as the eye could see, with a clear easterly horizon, which my husband immediately recognized as the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and to which we gave the name of the original discoverer, my husband placing it on his chart."

Shortly after the discovery of the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca a tragic accident befell a boat's crew of the *Imperial Eagle*, all of whom were killed by the natives near the spot named Martyr's Point by the Spaniards to commemorate a similar occurrence of an earlier day. The island near by was named Destruction Island—the Isla de Dolores of Bodega y Quadra. Thence the *Imperial Eagle* proceeded to China, where her cargo of eight hundred furs was sold for thirty thousand dollars.

In 1792 Captain Barkley, again accompanied by his wife, returned to the coast in the Brig *Halcyon*. But this time he did not proceed farther south than Norfolk Sound, now called Sitka. Captain Walbran records, upon the authority of Mrs. Barkley's journal, that subsequently the *Halcyon* was stolen by a man in whose charge she had been placed; but, strange to say, Captain Barkley found and recovered his vessel in Boston several years later.

It was at this time that the notorious John Meares made his first appearance on the coast. He had been in the Royal Navy, attaining the rank of lieutenant in 1778. Upon the conclusion in 1783 of the war between Great Britain and Spain and France, he retired from the service to take command of a merchant ship on a voyage to India. While at Calcutta Meares conceived the project of forming a company to engage in the furtrade on the American coast. In common with many adventurers of that age, he was spurred to activity by the glittering prophesies, concerning the future of this commerce, which obtained currency immediately after the publication of Cook's Voyage. Having purchased the *Nootka* of two hundred tons and the *Sea Otter* of one hundred tons, preparations were forthwith made to carry the design into execution. Meares himself took command of the *Nootka*, and William Tipping, who had also been a lieutenant





MEARES' LONG BOAT ENTERING THE STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA

from an old engraving



in the Royal Navy, commanded the *Sea Otter*. The *Nootka* sailed on the second of March, and after an unusually tedious voyage arrived at a Russian settlement in Unalaska, of which an interesting description is given in Meares' journal. Sailing thence on the 20th of August, the *Nootka* anchored in Captain Cook's Snug Corner Cove in Prince William Sound, where the *Sea Otter* was to meet her consort. Tipping had made this inlet earlier in the season, and he left the port before Meares' arrival. The *Sea Otter* was never heard of again, and it is all too evident that she was lost at sea with all hands. As the winter had already set in and it being considered inadvisable to run for the Sandwich Islands, Meares determined to spend "an inhospitable winter" in Prince William Sound. Accordingly the *Nootka* was moved to a good harbour some fifteen miles distant from Snug Corner Cove, where every preparation was made for the winter. In the meantime the natives made their appearance, but they had few skins, so after all nothing was gained by wintering in the North.

Meares gives a vivid description of the situation of the vessels at this time. "While" he says, "we were thus locked in, as it were, from the chearful light of day, and the vivifying warmth of solar rays,—no other comforts presented themselves to compensate in any degree, for the scene of desolation which encircled us.—While the tremendous mountains forbade almost a sight of the sky, and cast their nocturnal shadows over us in the midst of day, the land was impenetrable from the depth of snow, so that we were excluded from all hopes of any recreation, support or comfort, during the winter, but what could be found in the ship and ourselves." But this was only the beginning of the troubles of the unfortunate men cooped up in the *Nootka*.

The vessel was no longer capable of resisting the intense cold, and frost stood an inch thick below the deck. Then, as if this were not enough, an acute form of scurvy attacked the crew, and before long no less than twenty-three men, including the surgeon, were confined to their beds. The disorder became so virulent that before the weather changed there was scarcely a healthy man on board. Then the surgeon died and the survivors were deprived of medical aid. Meares gives a pathetic account of the expedition at this time. "Every advantage," he writes in his journal, "the sick could receive from the most tender and vigilant attention, they received from myself, the first officer and a seaman, who were yet in a state to do them that service. But still we continued to see and lament a gradual





diminution of our crew from this terrible disorder. Too often did I find myself called to assist in performing the dreadful office of dragging the dead bodies across the ice, to a shallow sepulcher which our own hands had hewn out for them on the shore. The sledge on which we fetched the wood was their hearse and the chasms in the ice their grave."

So the winter wore away to the accompaniment of death and disaster. At last spring returned and with it came relief in the *Queen Charlotte* from London, under the command of Captain George Dixon, who had been informed of Meares' predicament by the natives. Meares says that Captain Dixon was welcomed "as a guardian angel, with tears of joy." The *Queen Charlotte* was joined presently by her consort the *King George*, under Captain Portlock.

Captain Portlock and Captain Dixon did all that they could to assist the unfortunate crew of the *Nootka*, the former allowing two of his men to ship on board the *Nootka* to help her emaciated crew in navigating the vessel.

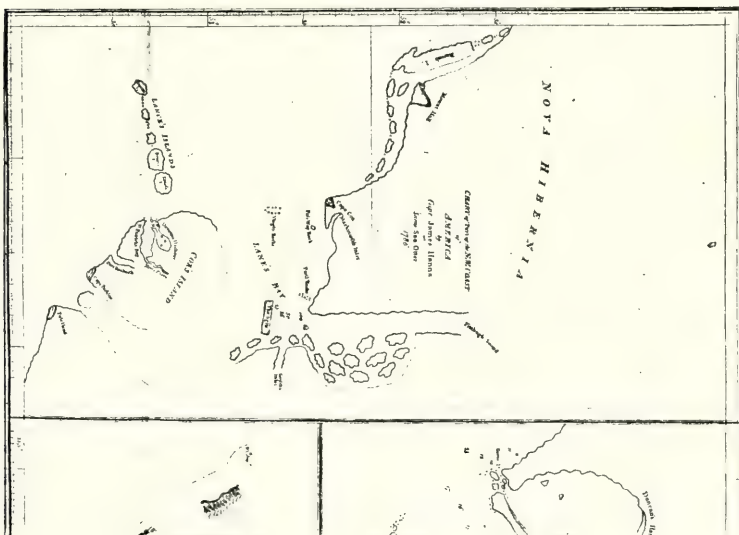
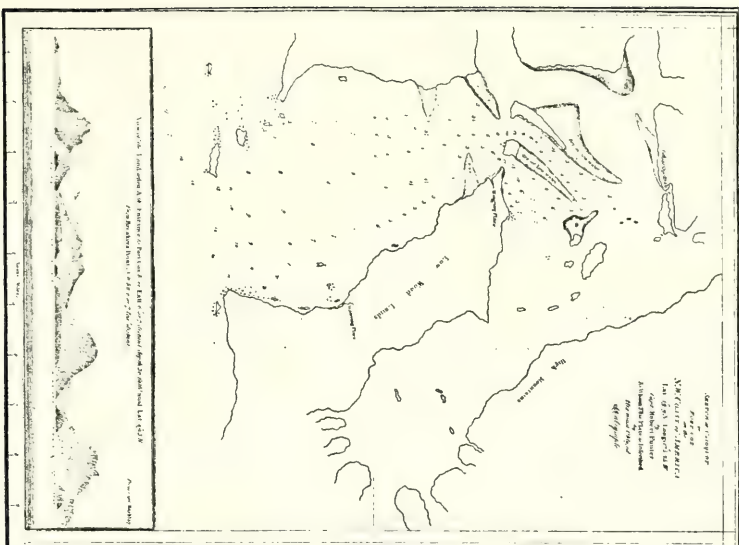
Strange as it may seem, this meeting, fortunate as it was for the *Nootka*, gave rise to a heated controversy between Meares and Dixon, which found expression in a series of pamphlets and letters which were later published in England. Among other things, Dixon said that the scurvy had been aggravated by drunkenness, an assertion which Meares contradicted with some heat. Mutual recriminations followed thick and fast, in the course of which Dixon compared Meares' map of the coast to "an old wife's butter pat." It appears that in return for the assistance rendered him, Meares was expected to return at once to China, leaving the coast to Portlock and Dixon. But Meares carried on a profitable trade on his voyage southward.

The *Nootka* set sail from the Sound on the 21st of June to the "infinite joy of her crew," of whom no less than twenty-three had died from exposure and scurvy in the course of the winter. After spending a month in the Sandwich Islands, Meares sailed for China, arriving at Macao on the 20th of October, 1787.

The enterprise was disastrous in many respects, but the failure did not dampen Meares' ardour, for in the following year he organized another expedition, having *Nootka* for its objective point.

Meares' first voyage, with all its hardships and privations, is typical of the furtrading expeditions, although few of them were so unfortunate as that which sailed in the *Nootka*.







The next voyage to deserve attention is that of Captains Portlock and Dixon in the *King George* and *Queen Charlotte*, the same vessels that found Meares in such a perilous situation in Prince William Sound. That expedition was among the first to sail from England for the new field, all of the ships previously mentioned, with the exception of the *Imperial Eagle*, having sailed from China or India. The enterprise was conceived in a broad and liberal spirit, for monetary profit was not the sole aim of the promoters, who hoped to add to the world's store of scientific knowledge, both in discovery and the gathering of information respecting the fauna and flora of the Northwest Coast of North America.

The novelty of the enterprise attracted the attention of Sir Joseph Banks, Lord Mulgrave and other prominent men. The Secretary of the Treasury named the larger vessel, a ship of three hundred and twenty tons, the *King George*, and the smaller one, a snow of two hundred tons, the *Queen Charlotte*. Richard Cadman Etches seems to have been the moving spirit in the enterprise. He and other traders entered into a partnership, under the title of the King George's Sound Company, the object of which was to promote trade in fur between the west coast of America and China. A license was obtained from the South Sea Company, which corporation still levied tribute upon British merchants under the provisions of its monopolistic charter. A similar license was also procured from the East India Company. It will be recalled that George Dixon had sailed with Captain Cook as armourer of the *Discovery*, while Portlock had also served under that famous officer as master's mate.

The vessels sailed from London on the 29th of August and from the Downs on the 2d of September, 1785. They doubled the Cape of Good Hope and arrived at Cook's River in July of the following year. After wintering at the Sandwich Islands in accordance with the general practice of the early traders, Portlock and Dixon again sailed for the Northwest Coast, where they found the *Nootka*, as related. After trading in the vicinity of Prince William Sound, the vessels separated in order to cover as much territory as possible. Dixon left the Hazy Islands towards the end of June and two or three days later crossed the entrance to the large opening afterwards named in his honour by Sir Joseph Banks. Leaving North Island, the *Queen Charlotte* hugged the west coast of the Queen Charlotte group. Of the names which appear on Dixon's maps, North Island,



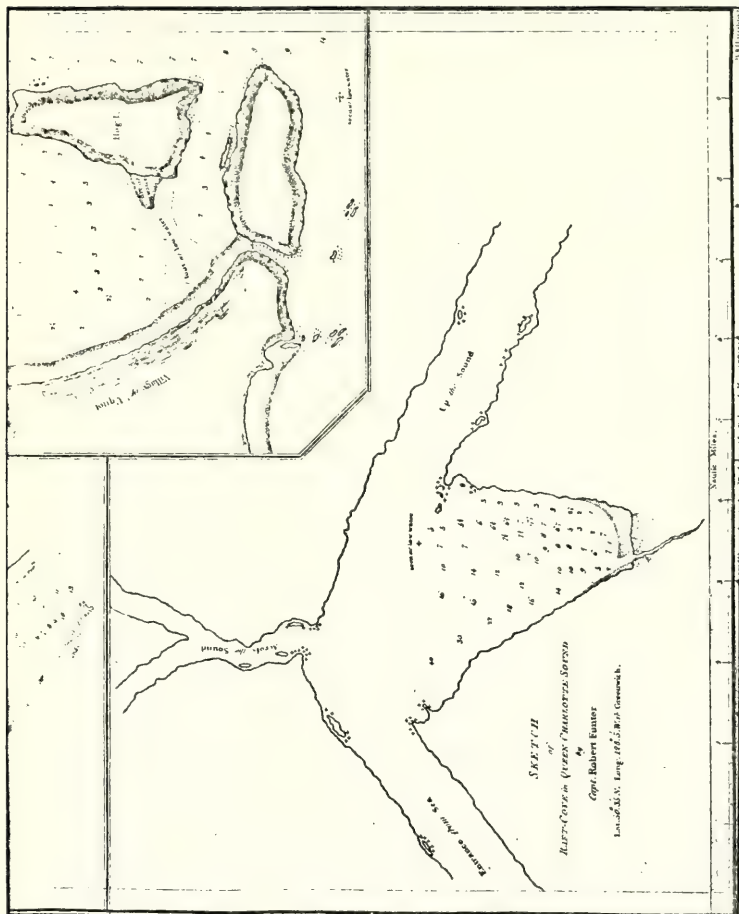
Cloak Bay, Hippa Island, and Cape St. James still survive. Round- ing the southern extremity of the group on the 25th day of July, 1787, Dixon continued his voyage northward along the eastern shore, until he sighted the high mountains which had been seen when crossing the Sound that separates the Queen Charlotte Islands from the Prince of Wales archipelago. "This circumstance," writes the author of Dixon's voyage, "clearly proved, the land we had been coasting along for near a month, to be a group of islands," which were accordingly named The Queen Charlotte's Isles after Dixon's ship the *Queen Charlotte*.

From the pages of Dixon's journal, published in the form of a series of letters, one may gather an idea of the manner in which the furtrade was conducted. Thus it is recorded in the journal, under the date of July 2, 1787, while the *Queen Charlotte* was off Cloak Bay, that:

"A scene now commenced, which absolutely beggars all description, and with which we were so overjoyed, that we could scarcely believe the evidence of our senses. There were ten canoes about the ship, which contained as nearly as I could estimate, 120 people; many of them brought most beautiful beaver cloaks; others excellent skins, and, in short, none came empty handed, and the rapidity with which they sold them was a circumstance additionally pleasing; they fairly quarelled with each other about which should sell his cloak first, and some actually threw their furs on board, if nobody was at hand to receive them; but we took particular care to let none go from the vessel unpaid. Toes were almost the only article we bartered with on this occasion and indeed they were taken so very eagerly, that there was not the least occasion to offer anything else. In less than half an hour we purchased near 300 sea otter skins, of an excellent quality; a circumstance which greatly raised our spirits, and the more, as both the number of fine furs, and the avidity of the natives in parting with them were convincing proofs, that no traffic whatever had recently been carried on near this place, and consequently we might expect a continuation of this plentiful commerce. That you may form some idea of the cloaks we purchased here, I shall just observe that they generally contain three good sea otter skins, one of which is cut in two pieces, afterwards they are neatly sewed together, so as to form a square and are loosely tied about the shoulders with small leather strings fastened on each side."









Continuing the voyage Dixon noticed and named Hippa Island, off which he shortened sail in order to allow the natives to come up with the vessel. Hippa Island is described as having "a very singular appearance, and on examining it nearer, we plainly perceived that they (the natives) lived on a small island and well fortified after the manner of a hippah, on which account we distinguished this place by the name of Hippah Island." The fortification was evidently well placed, for, says the journal, the access to it from the beach is steep and difficult of access, while the other sides were barricaded with pines, brushwood and fences of rails and boards, which rendered the stronghold almost impregnable.

The journal devotes many pages to a description of the manners and customs of the Indians met with in this quarter, but these observations are of more interest to the ethnologist than to the historian. It may be said in passing, however, that of the peculiar customs of these people none excited as much curiosity as the labrette, or lip ornament, of the women of the Queen Charlotte Islands, which is frequently mentioned in the journals of the traders. Captain Dixon was anxious to purchase one of these extraordinary ornaments, but the old woman to whom it belonged refused to part with it. Article after article was offered, only to be rejected. At last however, one of the sailors happened to show "the old lady," a few bright buttons, which caught her fancy, and in the end, she willingly parted with her cherished possession, which measured three and seven-eighths inches long by two and five-eighths inches. It was inlaid with a small pearly shell and decorated with a rim of copper.

In conversation with an old chief, the author of the journal gathered that the natives were addicted to cannibalism, though he is careful to add that he did not understand the chief clearly enough to assert "*positively*" that the warriors slain in battle were eaten by the victors—"yet there is every reason to fear that this horrid custom is practiced on this part of the coast." As a matter of fact it is highly unlikely that cannibalism was practiced by any of the natives of the Northwest Coast. It is true that it is asserted in more than one diary that the custom prevailed, but the idea seems to have arisen from a wrong conception of certain ceremonial rites.

Each tribe of the Queen Charlotte Islands was governed by its respective chief, but the family occupied an important place in the social organization of these primitive peoples. Here as elsewhere



on the coast the chief usually traded for the whole tribe, but it does not appear that he had the right to dispose of articles without the consent of the owners. Sometimes the women did the bargaining. The journal concludes an interesting account of the natives with the following passage:

"In addition to what I have occasionally said, respecting the savage temper and brutal disposition of the people of these Islands, I cannot help remarking, that there is a kind of ferocity even in their manner of singing. It must be allowed, that their songs, are performed with regularity, and in good time, but they are entirely destitute of that pleasing modulation and harmony of cadence, which we had invariably been accustomed to hear in the songs at other parts of the coast."

The voyage was commercially successful, no less than one thousand, eight hundred and twenty-one sea-otter skins being obtained at the Queen Charlotte Islands. It was not always an easy matter to please the natives, because, "so great a number of traders required a variety of trade, and we were frequently obliged to produce every article before we could please our numerous friends." That the traders were more than pleased with the result of their operations in this particular quarter is proved by an entry in the journal which runs: "Thus in one fortunate month has our success been much greater than that probably of both vessels during the rest of the voyage—So uncertain is the fur trade on this inhospitable coast."

Leaving the Queen Charlotte Islands, the *Queen Charlotte* sailed for Nootka Sound, and on August 8th she spoke the *Prince of Wales*, Captain Colnett, and the *Princess Royal*, Captain Duncan, these vessels having sailed from England in September, 1786. Mr. John Etches (brother of Richard Cadman Etches), who was on board the *Prince of Wales*, informed Dixon that they had spent a month in Nootka but had done very little business, as Captain Barkley in the *Imperial Eagle* had arrived there before them. This intelligence caused Dixon to change his plans and he accordingly sailed for China by way of the Sandwich Islands. Dixon arrived in England in September, 1788, and in the following year published the account of his voyage written by his supercargo, William Beresford.

Meanwhile Captain Portlock having cruised along the Northwest Coast, sailed for China. Portlock and Dixon were very successful, having been fortunate enough to acquire between them no



less than two thousand, five hundred and fifty-two skins, which realised \$54,857 in China.

The published accounts of this expedition give much valuable information respecting the furtrade as it was conducted in the early days, and the charts of the commanders contributed not a little to geographical knowledge. Portlock also published a narrative which was dedicated to King George III. Of the two works, Captain Dixon's is the more valuable, chiefly because of its interesting description of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

It would be impossible to give an extended account of all the voyages to the Northwest Coast which by this time had become a favourite haunt of many adventurers, but no history of the furtrading era could be complete did it not contain some reference to the second voyage of John Meares, who achieved a unique distinction in the annals of Northwestern America. Undaunted by his first experience, this worthy had no sooner returned to China than he set about the organization of that expedition which was destined to alter not only the whole trend of political events at that period but also the future of international politics. In January, 1788, Meares purchased and fitted out two vessels, named respectively, the *Felice* and the *Iphigenia*, the former of two hundred and thirty tons, the latter of two hundred tons burden. Meares commanded the *Felice*, while the command of the *Iphigenia* was given to Captain Douglas, who had already visited the coast of America. The crews consisted of Europeans and Chinese, the latter being shipped as an experiment. Meares' remarks upon the characteristics of the Chinese, although written so long ago, are not without practical interest even in their latter day application. "They have," he says, "been generally esteemed an hardy and industrious, as well as an ingenious race of people; they live on fish and rice, and, requiring but low wages, it is a matter also of economical consideration to employ them; and during the whole of the voyage there was every reason to be satisfied with their services. If hereafter trading posts should be established on the American coast a colony of this kind would be a very important acquisition." Meares continues: "A much greater number of Chinese solicited to enter this service than could be received; and so far did the spirit of enterprise influence them, that those they were under the necessity of refusing gave the most unequivocal marks of mortification and disappointment. From the many who offered





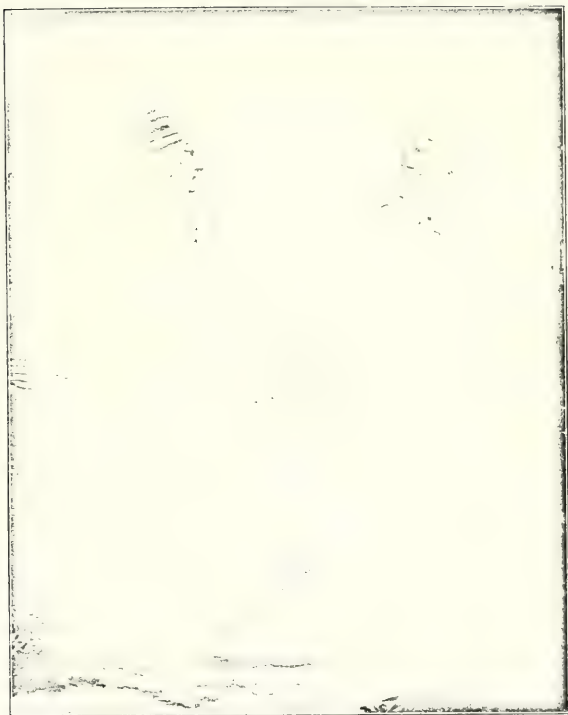
themselves, fifty were selected as fully sufficient for the purposes of the voyage; they were, as has been already observed, chiefly handicraftmen of various kinds, with a small proportion of sailors who had been used to the junks which navigated every part of the Chinese Seas."

The object of the expedition was to establish a factory or base at Nootka Sound, where a small vessel was to be built for the coasting trade.

On the evening of January 22d, 1788, the *Felice* sailed from the Tupa. After visiting the Sandwich Islands a course was laid for the Northwest Coast of America and on the 13th day of May after a stormy voyage, the *Felice* "happily anchored in Friendly Cove, in King George's Sound, abreast of the village of Nootka, in four fathoms of water, and within a hundred yards of the shore; after a passage of three months and twenty-three days from China." A large concourse of natives welcomed the vessels and in a short time the ship was surrounded with a great number of canoes, filled with men, women, and children. Comekcla, a native of Nootka, who had been carried to China by an earlier expedition, was restored to his friends, "dressed in a scarlet regimental coat decorated with brass buttons, and with a hat set off with a flaunting cocade, decent linens and other appendages of European dress, which was far more than sufficient to excite the extreme admiration of his countrymen." The occasion was celebrated with a magnificent feast of whale blubber and oil, and the evening was passed in great rejoicing. A day or two later Maquilla and Callicum, two of the noted chiefs of the Sound, visited Meares. They were accompanied by a fleet of war canoes which moved in procession round the ship, while the crews sang "a pleasing though sonorous melody." It will be recalled that the natives of this place accorded a similar welcome to Captain Cook in the year 1778. Each canoe contained eighteen men clad in robes of the most beautiful skins of the sea-otter, which covered them from their necks to their ankles, a sight which must have further excited the cupidity and warmed the hearts of the furtraders.

Without loss of time Meares proceeded to establish a base for his future trading operations. A present of copper, iron and other articles secured the good-will of Maquilla, who, "most readily consented to grant us a spot of ground in his territory, whereon a house might be built for the accommodation of the people we intended to leave





CALLICUM AND MAQUILLA  
Chiefs of Nootka Sound



there." Maquilla also promised to protect the men who were to remain at Nootka. In return for his assistance and protection, Maquilla was given a pair of pistols and Callicum was also rewarded with suitable presents. This was the genesis of the famous Nootka affair of the following year.

On the ground granted by Maquilla, a house was built, which is thus described by Meares: "On the ground-floor there was ample room for the coopers, sail-makers, and other artisans to work in bad weather; a large room was also set apart for the stores and provisions and the armourer's shop was attached to one end of the building and communicated with it. The upper story was divided into an eating room and chambers for the party. On the whole, our house, though it was not built to satisfy a lover of architectural beauty, was admirably well calculated for the purpose for which it was destined, and appeared to be a structure of uncommon magnificence to the natives of King George's Sound."

Meares adds: "A strong breastwork was thrown up round the house, enclosing a considerable area of ground, which, with a cannon placed so as to command the Cove and the village of Nootka, formed a secure fortification. Within a short distance of the breastwork was laid the keel of a vessel of Forty or fifty tons. In short every preparation was made for an extended occupation of the place."

The men were all now busily engaged in building the house and the vessel, and in trading with the natives; but this is not the place for a full and particular account of Meares' enterprise at Nootka. Reference should be made however, to the fact, that before proceeding on his voyage Maquilla was again requested to protect the shore party in the absence of the ship. "As a bribe to secure his attachment," says Meares, "he was promised, that when we finally left the coast he should enter into full possession of the house and all the goods and chattels thereunto belonging." It will be remembered that this statement was used later by the Americans in the Oregon Boundary dispute, to prove that Meares' occupation of Nootka Sound was nothing more than a temporary expedient. It appears nevertheless that that officer fully intended to establish a post there, as will be shown later.

The *Felice* then sailed for Clayoquot, where two weeks were spent in trading with the Indians. She then passed down the coast to the Strait of Juan de Fuca which Meares named without reference to the journals and chart of Captain Barkley, thus implying that the dis-



covery was his own. In view of the fact that Meares had obtained from John Henry Cox, of Canton, Barkley's chart of the coast as well as information from Hanna, Lowrie, and Guise, his conduct on this occasion is at least open to question.

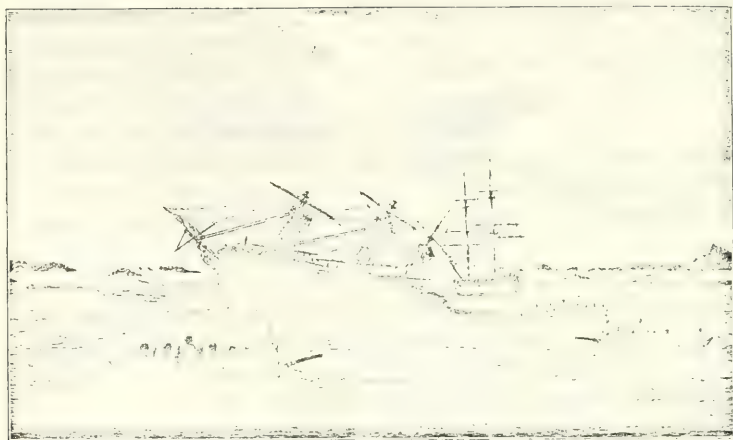
Dr. C. F. Newcombe, in his monograph entitled "The first circum-navigation of Vancouver Island," gives Mrs. Barkley's explanation as to how it was that her husband's papers came into the possession of Meares. It is as follows: "Captain Meares got possession of my journal and plans from the persons in China to whom he was bound under a penalty of £5,000 to give them up for a certain time, for, as these persons stated, mercantile objects, they not wishing the knowledge of the coast to be published. Captain Meares, however, published and claimed the merit of my husband's discoveries therein contained."

Continuing the voyage the *Felice* sailed down the coast in search of the large river said to have been discovered by the Spaniards under the forty-sixth parallel. Meares found the bay into which the Columbia river debouches, but in attempting to make a landing shallow water and the breakers on the bar forced him to relinquish the attempt. His cursory examination of this bay led Meares to remark: "We can now with safety assert, that there is no such River as that of Saint Roc as laid down in the charts." To commemorate his failure to discover the Great River of the West, the explorer named the bay Deception Bay and the promontory to the northward thereof, Cape Disappointment.

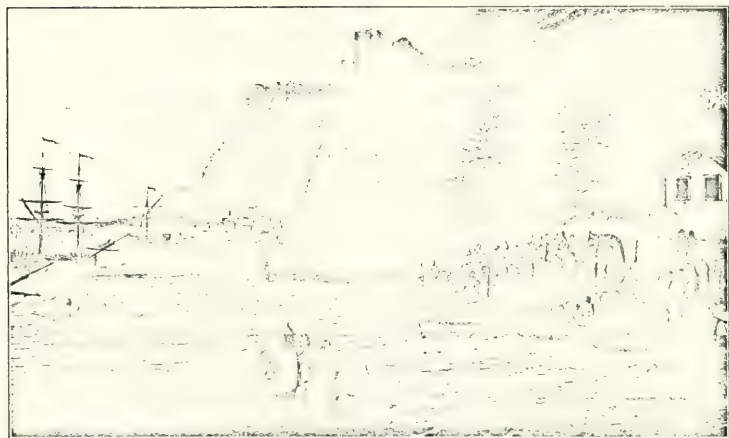
Upon returning northward, the *Felice* anchored in Barkley Sound on July 11th (1788), Meares having determined to explore the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The mate, Duffin, was accordingly despatched in the longboat, with instructions to explore the strait discovered by Barkley in the previous year. According to Meares, Duffin sailed nearly thirty leagues up the strait, which at that distance from the sea was, he alleges, about fifteen leagues broad, with a clear horizon to the east for fifteen leagues more. "Such an extraordinary circumstance," Meares goes on to say, "filled us with strange conjectures as to the extremity of this strait, which we concluded, at all events, could not be at any great distance from Hudson's Bay." In this statement Meares' fertile imagination found full play, for from Duffin's own journal it is sufficiently evident that he did not reach a point more than ten or twelve leagues from Tatoosh Island







THE DISCOVERY ON THE ROCKS IN QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S SOUND



THE LAUNCH OF THE NORTH WEST AMERICA AT NOOTKA SOUND



or Neah Bay. There is little doubt that Meares did not scruple to grossly exaggerate the importance of this discovery in order to make good his claim against the Spaniards for the seizure of his vessels in 1789, under arguments which appear in a later chapter. It should be borne in mind that he did not publish his work on the North West Coast of America until 1790, a year or more after the seizure of the ships by the Spanish officer, Estevan Martinez.

Making Nootka on July 26th, Meares found that good progress had been made in the construction of the vessel and in a few weeks every preparation was completed for launching the first ship ever built by Europeans on the Northwest Coast. It should be mentioned that Captain Douglas in the *Iphigenia* reached the Sound towards the end of August, and with the arrival of this reinforcement the different operations were pursued with redoubled vigour. Another arrival, not so welcome perhaps, was that of Captain Gray in the American sloop *Washington*, which dropped anchor in Friendly Cove on the 17th of September. The *Washington*, with her consort, the *Columbia*, had sailed from Boston in 1787 to engage in the fur-trade on the Northwest Coast. "The master of the *Washington*," Meares relates, "was very much surprised at seeing a vessel on the stocks, as well as on finding any one here before him; for they had little or no notion of any commercial expeditions whatever to this part of America. He appeared, however, to be very sanguine in the superior advantages which his countrymen from New England might reap from this track of trade; and was big with many mighty projects in which we understood he was protected by the American Congress. With these circumstances, however, as we had no immediate concern, we did not even intrude an opinion, but treated Mr. Gray and his ship's company with politeness and attention." Three days later, on the 20th of September, the *North West America* was launched. This event is so picturesque an incident in the annals of the coast that it may well be described in Meares' own words: "On the 20th, at noon, an event, to which we had so long looked with anxious expectation, and had been the fruit of so much care and labour, was ripe for accomplishment. The vessel was then waiting to quit the stocks; and to give all due honour to such an important scene, we adopted, as far as was in our power, the ceremony of other dock-yards. As soon as the tide was at its proper height the English ensign was displayed on shore at the house, and on board the new



vessel, which, at the proper moment, was named the *North West America*, as being the first bottom ever built and launched in this part of the globe.

"It was a moment of much expectation. The circumstances of our situation made us look to it with more than common hope. Maquilla, Callicum, and a large body of their people, who had received information of the launch, were come to behold it. The Chinese carpenters did not very well conceive the last operation of a business in which they themselves had been so much and so materially concerned. Nor shall we forget to mention the chief of the Sandwich Islands, whose every power was absorbed in the business that approached, and who had determined to be on board the vessel when she glided into the water. The presence of the Americans ought also to be considered, when we are describing the attendant ceremonies of this important crisis; which, from the labour that produced it,—the scene that followed it,—the spectators that beheld it, and the commercial advantages, as well as civilizing ideas, connected with it, will attach some little consequence to its proceeding, in the mind of the philosopher, as well as in the view of the politician.

"But our suspense was not of long duration;—on the firing of a gun the vessel started from the ways like a shot.—Indeed she went off with so much velocity, that she had nearly made her way out of the harbour; for the fact was, that not being very much accustomed to this business, we had forgotten to place an anchor and cable on board, to bring her up, which is the usual practice on these occasions; the boats, however, soon towed her to her intended station, and in a short time the *North West America* was anchored close to the *Iphigenia* and the *Felice*."

On the 24th September, 1788, Meares sailed for China leaving Captain Douglas in charge of the establishment at Nootka. Soon after the departure of the *Felice*, Douglas, in the *Iphigenia*, accompanied by the *North West America* sailed for the Sandwich Islands to speed the winter. The *Washington*, under Gray, remained at Nootka, where she was presently joined by Captain Kendrick in the *Columbia*.

And, so the eventful year 1788 drew to a close. All was peace and tranquillity, but it was the calm before the storm. Little did the chief actors in those strange scenes imagine that their operations were



Robert Gray

Connel Watets

Joseph Ingraham

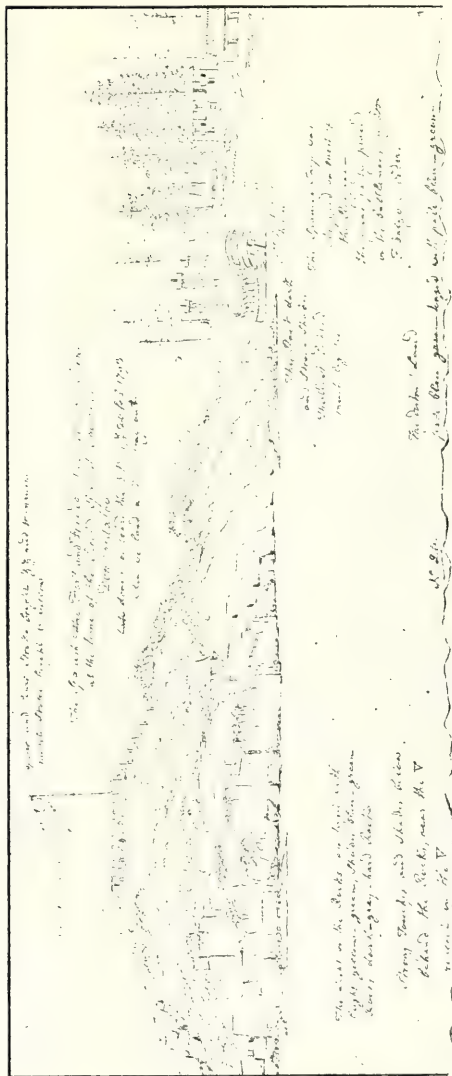
John Kendrick  
J. Hoskins





destined to change the complexion of subsequent events, to divert the course of history into another and more wholesome channel in the interests of the race and to be productive of a civilization then undreamed of.





VIEW OF SPANISH FORT, NOOTKA SOUND, FROM CONTEMPORARY DRAWING DATED 1793  
Original in provincial archives



## CHAPTER VII

### THE NOOTKA SOUND CONTROVERSY

In 1789 it was thought that Russian, Spanish, and British subjects intended to occupy Nootka Sound and erect trading posts there. Of these intentions, that which had the least substance in it, if indeed it had any at all,—the Russian—was the prime cause of the trouble which arose at Nootka in that year. Martinez and Haro, after their investigation of the Russian settlement in Alaska in 1788, had reported to the Viceroy of Mexico that Cusmich had informed them that he only awaited the arrival of four frigates from Siberia to form an establishment at Nootka. From the exaggerated statements made by this person on other matters, as, for instance, the number of existing Russian settlements and their inhabitants, and from the absence of any independent or corroborative evidence, it is, perhaps, justifiable to conclude that this was mere fiction. Much excited about this threatened trespass upon alleged Spanish territory, Martinez urged upon Florez, the Viceroy, the desirability, nay the necessity of immediately forestalling this move by planting a Spanish settlement at that place.<sup>1</sup> Though forbidden to incur such expense without special royal order, the urgency of the occasion forced action upon Florez, who immediately gave the necessary instructions.

On February 17, 1789, Martinez, in command of the *Princesa* and the *San Carlos*, with Haro as second in authority, sailed from San Blas. He carried minute detailed orders to govern his conduct in the event of his meeting British, Russian, or American vessels. If the former, Martinez was to treat them kindly and endeavour to convince them of Spain's prior right of occupancy, referring them particularly to Captain Cook's instructions not to touch at any port in the Spanish dominions on the west coast of America unless forced by unavoidable accident and, in that case, not to remain longer than

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<sup>1</sup> Martinez to Florez, December 5, 1788; MSS. Arch. Gen. de Indies Seville, 90-3-18.



absolutely necessary, and reminding them that according to his own statement Captain Cook had purchased two silver spoons from the Indians at Nootka, which, being of Spanish workmanship, demonstrated the priority of Spanish discovery.<sup>2</sup> If Russian vessels were encountered, the intimate friendship then existing between Spain and Russia was to be put forward, the necessity of Spanish ports on the Mediterranean to the latter nation, then engaged in war with Turkey and Sweden was to be dwelt upon, and finally it was to be intimated that in any difficulty Spain would have the powerful support of her French ally. If American vessels appeared at Nootka they were to be given to understand that Spain was extending her settlements along the coast to Prince Williams Sound. And to all of them Martinez was instructed to point out the active steps now being taken by sending land expeditions of troops, colonists, and missionaries. If, in the face of these special and general arguments, an attempt to form a settlement was persisted in, he was to repel force by force.

Besides the regular crews these vessels carried a notary, Canizares, two chaplains, Don José Lopez de Nava and Don José Maria Diaz, and four Franciscan friars, Severo Patero, Lorenzo Lacies, José Espi, and Francisco Sanchez. A packet boat, the *Aranzazu*, would follow in March with supplies and reinforcements. Later it was intended to send out a land expedition including troops, colonists, and live stock.<sup>3</sup>

Reaching Nootka on May 5th, Martinez found there the *Iphigenia* under Captain Douglas and the American ship, *Columbia*, in command of Captain Kendrick. The *North West America* and the *Washington* were both absent on cruises in northern waters. Indeed, as the latter vessel was leaving the sound she fell in with the *Princessa*. Haswell reports the interview as follows: "He was no sooner informed who we were than he said if there was anything in his ship we stood in need of he would supply us. He informed the officers that went on board that his ship was fitted out in company with two others from Cadiz to make discoveries on this coast. That he had put in on the coast of New Spain and lost most of his European seamen. The deficiency he was obliged to supply with the naturalized natives of California. That he had been in the northward and we noticed he had a northern skin canoe lashed on his quarter. He

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<sup>2</sup> Cook's Voyage, ed. 1785, Introduction, p. xxxii.

<sup>3</sup> Florez to Valdez, December 23, 1788; MSS. Arch. Gen. de Indies, 90-3-18.





said he had been in Bering's Straits, that he had found much snow, that he had parted with his consort a few days ago in a gale of wind, and he expected them to join him at Nootka Sound. He was very inquisitive what ships were lying in the sound. When he was informed Captain Douglas lay there he said it would make him a good prize. The ship's name is the *Princessa*, belonging to His Most Catholic Majesty, commanded by Don Stephen Joseph Martinez. This gentleman endeavored to do everything to serve us. He made Captain Gray presents of brandy, wine, hams, sugar, and, in short, everything he thought would be acceptable. When we parted from him we saluted him with seven guns and the compliment was returned."<sup>4</sup>

This quotation serves also to show that duplicity on this western coast was not confined to Meares. We are unaware of the motives which induced Martinez to make such statements as are set out above, nor does Haswell in any place throw light upon this strange story.

A great deal of discussion has arisen upon the question whether when Martinez arrived the house which Meares had built in the preceding summer was still in existence. Meares' memorial seems to imply that it was, though there is no positive statement to that effect. The American captains, Gray and Ingraham, in their letter written three years later, and with unmistakable Spanish bias, say that no sign or vestige of it then existed, and that Captain Douglas, before proceeding to the Sandwich Islands in the fall of 1788, had pulled it down, taking the boards on board of the *Iphigenia* and giving the roof to Captain Kendrick.<sup>5</sup> However the house was disposed of, it may be accepted as a fact that in May, 1789, it had ceased to exist, and that there was therefore upon the ground no evidence of any intention on Meares' part to effect a permanent settlement.

Though unquestionably British in reality, Captain Douglas saw fit to make the *Iphigenia* appear to the Spaniards as a Portuguese bottom. This was in accordance with Meares' own conduct: while the illustrations in Meares' *Voyage* flaunt the British flag, the evidence is that in his operations on this coast he endeavoured to make his vessels appear Portuguese.<sup>6</sup> Thus Duncan, who met the *Felice* in

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<sup>4</sup> Haswell's Log, May, 1789.

<sup>5</sup> Letter, August 3, 1792, in Greenhow, App. C.

<sup>6</sup> Dixon's Further Remarks on Meares. Letter from Duncan therein.



August, 1788, off Nootka, states that she was under Portuguese colours, and claimed to have come from Lisbon, and Haswell also says that when the *Washington* arrived in September, 1788, both the *Felice* and the *Iphigenia* were flying the Portuguese flag.<sup>7</sup>

Martinez enquired why the *Iphigenia* was in the sound, and Douglas claimed that he had put in in distress and was expecting supplies to arrive in a vessel from China. For a few days all went well, but in inspecting the Portuguese instructions, Martinez took exception to a clause whereby the captain of the *Iphigenia* was instructed, if interfered with by English, Russian, or Spanish vessels to defend the ship and if superior to the attacking vessel to bring her to Macao as a pirate. The misunderstanding, which probably arose from an error in interpretation, led to the seizure of the *Iphigenia*, the hauling down of the Portuguese flag and the raising of the Spanish. Part of the officers and crew were imprisoned on the *Princessa* and the remainder on the *San Carlos*, which had arrived in the meantime.<sup>8</sup> After an interval of twelve days the *Iphigenia* was restored to Captain Douglas, but under circumstances the truth of which it seems impossible to ascertain, as the accounts given by Douglas and Meares on the one hand and by Martinez and the American captains on the other are so divergent as to be impossible of reconciliation. It is clear, however, that the *Iphigenia* was supplied with stores, the quantity and quality of which are subjects of dispute. For these Douglas gave (willingly or by force) bills upon Cavalho, the pretended Portuguese owner. Martinez, who made almost every day a statement of the occurrences before the notary Canizares, gives therein as his reason for releasing the vessel that he had not sufficient men available to sail her to San Blas, hence he concluded to release her upon receiving a bond binding the owner to pay the fair value of ship and cargo if the Viceroy should declare her lawful prize.

On May 31st, after a farewell dinner on the *Princessa*, at which all the officers in the sound were present, the *Iphigenia*, with a parting salute from the Spaniards, sailed ostensibly for Macao, but at midnight changed her course to the northward, Douglas having, as he says, "no idea of running for Macao with only between sixty and seventy sea-otter skins which I had on board."<sup>9</sup> On this cruise he

<sup>7</sup> Haswell's Log, September 16, 1788.

<sup>8</sup> Manning's Nootka Sound, pp. 320, 321.

<sup>9</sup> Appendix No. 12 to Meares' Memorial.



obtained about seven hundred sea-otter skins. It would thus appear that the vessel was not such a wreck as Douglas and Meares represent, nor had she been looted to the extent stated by Meares in his memorial; she must also have had provisions and trading goods to a far greater quantity than Meares states, else such a trip had been in vain. Meares' almost proverbial mendacity no doubt accounts for these inconsistencies. His interest when his memorial was prepared was to stir with indignation the popular mind ever prone to hatred of the Spaniards and to represent their conduct as not only unwarranted but as grossly inhuman.

The *North West America* returned on June 8th, ignorant of the events which had transpired during her six weeks' absence. Martinez at once seized her on learning that she was owned by Cavalho. Being a smaller vessel and requiring only a small crew, he hoisted the Spanish flag upon her, re-named her the *Gertrudis*, after his wife, put aboard her a Spanish crew under David Coolidge of the *Washington*, and sent her southward on a trading voyage, using, Meares claims, with some likelihood of truth, her supplies for that purpose. But this statement cannot be accepted at its face value, as the vessel had returned in order to obtain a supply of trading goods from the vessels which were daily expected, but had not yet arrived, from China.

During this time the foundation of a settlement was being laid. A fort mounting ten guns was built on Hog Island and occupied by a garrison. A workshop, a bakery, and a sort of barracks or lodging house were erected. On June 24th formal possession was taken of the port of Nootka with all the pomp and ceremony the Spaniard loves so well. The formal document is a very high-sounding instrument, of which the following is a translation:<sup>10</sup>

In the Name of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, One True God in three Distinct Persons, who is the creative principle and creator of all things, without whom nothing good can be instituted, achieved, or preserved—and Whereas the principle of everything good must be in God—and therefore it behooves us to begin it in God—for the glory and honour of his most holy name.

Therefore know all men to whom these presents and the present Chart of Possession shall come that: Today being Wednesday, the

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<sup>10</sup> MSS. Arch. Gen. de Indies Seville, 90-3-18.



24th day of June, 1789, on the arrival of the frigate named *Nuestra Senora del Rosario* (alias *La Princesa*) together with the packet-boat, *San Carlos el Filipino*, both belonging to His Most Mighty, Illustrious, and Catholic Majesty Carlos the Third, King of Castille, of Leon, of Aragon, of all the Sicilies, of Jerusalem, of Navarra, of Granada, of Toledo, of Valencia, of Galicia, of Majorca, of Sevilla, of Sardinia, of Corsica, of Cordova, of Murcia Jaen, of the Algarves, of Algeciras, of Gibraltar, of the Canary Islands, of the Eastern Indies and Western Islands, and of the first land (foreshore?) in the Oceanic Sea, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Bologna, of Brabant and Milan, Count of Aspurg, Flanders, Tyrol, and Barcelona, Lord of Biscay and Nolina, the said frigate and packet-boat by command of His Excellency Don Manuel Antonio Florez Maldonado Martinez de Angul y Bodguin, Knight of the Order of Calatrava, Commander of Nolino and Laguna Rota, Lieutenant General of the Royal Armada, Viceroy and Captain General of New Spain, President of the Royal Audiencia, and Sub-Delegate General of Corres in the said Kingdom, having sailed from the Port of San Blas on the Southern Sea, in the Government of the Viceroy aforesaid, on the 17th day of February in the same year, for the purpose of discovery along the coast from Monterrey northwards, this expedition being under the command-in-chief of Don Estevan José Martinez, Ensign of Marine, in the Royal Armada; and said expedition being anchored in the port of Santa Cruz, one of the numerous harbours contained in the Bay of San Lorenzo de Nuca, with the aforesaid frigate of his command, and the said packet-boat of his following; said commander-in-chief having disembarked with the officers of both ships, with the troops, and a number of the sailors, together with the Father Chaplains Don José Lopez de Nava and Don José Maria Diaz and the four Missionaries of the Order of San Francis of the Apostolic College of San Fernando de Mexico, Brother Severo Patero (President), Brother Lorenzo Lacies, Brother José Espi, and Brother Francisco Sanchez—the said commander drew out a cross, which he worshipped devoutly on his knees, together with all those who accompanied him: Then the chaplains and friars sang “Te Deum Laudamus”—and the canticle having been concluded, the commander said in a loud voice: “In the name of His Majesty the King Don Carlos the III, Our Sovereign whom may God keep many years, with an increase of our Dominions and Kingdoms, for the service of God, and for the good





and prosperity of his vassals, and for the interests of the mighty lords the Kings, his heirs and successors, in the future, as his commander of these ships, and by virtue of the orders and instructions which were given to me in his Royal Name, by the aforesaid His Excellency the Viceroy of New Spain, I take, and I have taken, I seize, and I have seized, possession of this soil, where I have at present disembarked which had been formerly discovered by us, in the year 1774—and once more, on the present day—for all time to come, in the said Royal Name, and in the name of the Royal Crown of Castille and Leon, as aforesaid—as if it was my own thing, which it is, and shall be and which really belongs to the King aforesaid, by reason of the donation and the bull ‘*Expedio Notu Proprio*’ of our Most Holy Father Alexander VI, Pontiff of Rome, by which he donated to the Most High and Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand V and Isabel his spouse, Kings of Castille and Leon, of illustrious memory, and to their successors and heirs—one-half the world—by deed made at Rome on the 4th of May in the year 1493—by virtue of which these present lands belong to the said Royal Crown of Castille and Leon, and as such I take, and I have taken, possession of these lands aforesaid, and the adjoining districts, seas, rivers, ports, bays, gulfs, archipelagoes, and this Port of Santa Cruz, in the island named by Martinez—among the many which are enclosed in the Bay of San Lorenzo de Nuca—which bay is situated in latitude north  $49^{\circ} 33'$  and longitude  $20^{\circ} 18'$ —west of the meridian of San Blas where I am at present anchored with the said frigate and packet-boat of my command, and I place them, and they shall be placed under the dominion and power of the said Royal Crown of Castille and Leon, as aforesaid, and as if it was my own property, which it is.” And as a sign of such possession he drew his sword which had hung by his side, and with it he counted the trees, the branches, and the lands; he disturbed the stones on the beach and in the fields without encountering any opposition, asking those present to be witnesses of these facts, and to me, Rafael de Canizares, who am the Notary appointed to this expedition by the Commander-in-Chief, he ordered me to relate the facts in due form, as a public testimony thereof. Then taking a large cross on his shoulders, and the crews of both ships having been formed in marching column, armed with guns and other weapons, the procession marched out, the chaplains and friars chanting the Litany of “Rogation”—the whole troop responding—and the procession having halted, the commander



planted the cross in the ground, and made a heap of stones at the foot thereof—as a sign and in memory of the taking of possession in the name of His Majesty Carlos III King of all Spain (whom God keep)—of all these lands and neighbouring districts discovered, continuous, and contiguous—and gave the name of Santa Cruz to this port, as has been said. And when the cross was planted, they worshipped it once more, and all prayed, asking in supplication from our Lord Jesus Christ, that He should accept their offering, because everything had been done for the glory and honour of His Holy Name, and in order to exalt and enrich our holy catholic faith—and to introduce the word of the Holy Gospel among these savage nations, which until the present time had been kept in ignorance of the true knowledge and doctrine—which will guard them and deliver them from the snares and perils of the Demon, and from the blindness in which they have lived—for the salvation of their souls—after which the chaplains and friars began chanting the hymn, “Vexilla Regis.” Following this a solemn high mass was celebrated on an altar which the commander had caused to be erected, by the Rev. Chaplain of our frigate, Don José Lopez de Nava, assisted by the chaplain of the packet-boat, Don José Maria Diaz, and the four friars aforesaid—this being the first mass which was said in this land, in honour of our Lord God Almighty—and for the extirpation of the Devil and of all idolatry. The sermon was given by the Very Rev. Father President Severo Patero, Apostolic Missionary of the order of San Francis and of the Royal College of San Ferdinand of Propaganda of the Faith of the City of Mexico. This function being concluded the aforesaid commander, as a further sign and testimony of the taking of possession, caused a tree to be cut, which he had made into a cross, into which he engraved the Holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, with four capital letters I. N. R. I.—and wrote at the foot of the cross: Carolus tertius, Rex Hispaniorum.

In witness whereof these presents were signed by the commander and witnessed by the captain of the packet-boat *San Carlos*, Don Gonzales Lopez de Haro; the first pilot of the Armada, Don José Tovar, the chaplains aforesaid, Don José Lopez de Nava, Don José Maria Diaz, and the four friars of the College of San Ferdinand. And I, the notary appointed by the said commander, authenticate these presents as a true testimony of what took place—as it has been related herewith.



Signed: Estevan José Martinez; Gonzales Lopez de Haro; José Tovar y Tamariz; Br. José Alexandro Lopez de Nava; Fray Lorenzo Lacies; Fray José Espi; Fray Francisco Miguel Sanchez.

Before me,

RAFAEL CANIZARES.

This is a copy:

Mexico, August 27, 1789.

ANTONIO BOUILLAZ.

The *Princess Royal*, which, as already shown, had passed into the control of Meares and his associates, reached Nootka on June 15th in command of Captain Hudson. Before entering the port, two launches, in which were Martinez, Kendrick, and Funter of the *North West America*, approached the vessel. Hudson enquired if they were armed. The reply was reassuring; they were, but only with a bottle of brandy. The visitors remained aboard all night and the next morning the *Princess Royal* was towed into harbour. A few days later Martinez sent an official note to enquire the reason of her being there, in what he was pleased to call a recognized Spanish port. Hudson replied that he wished to refit after his long voyage from Macao and that as soon as he had obtained wood and water he trusted to be permitted to depart in peace. Martinez not only did so, but granted him a circular letter to all Spanish vessels to allow him to pass on his way unmolested.<sup>11</sup>

Just as the *Princess Royal* passed out and sailed away on July 2nd, the fourth vessel, the *Argonaut*, arrived. Martinez, learning that a vessel was in the offing, and thinking the anxiously expected *Aranzazu* had at last appeared, went with the American officers to meet her in two launches. On going on board he presented a letter from Hudson which put Captain Colnett at his ease, and the Spanish launches towed the *Argonaut* into harbour. Captain Funter, who formed one of the party, informed Colnett of the occurrences and advised him to remain outside, but relying on the Spaniard's honor he allowed his vessel to be taken in and anchored between the Spanish ships.<sup>12</sup> The *Argonaut* had on board the material for a sloop, the necessities for building and equipping a trading post and some twenty-nine Chinese artisans as the nucleus of a future colony which was

<sup>11</sup> Manning's Nootka Sound, pp. 328, 329.

<sup>12</sup> Colnett's Voyage, pp. 96-99; Gray and Ingraham Letter, in Greenhow, App. C.; Arch. Gen. de Indies Seville, 90-3-18.



to surround his future trading post—Fort Pitt. Part of the scheme was to import from the Sandwich Islands wives for these persons. Meares in his Voyage says that these Chinese numbered seventy, but in the Spanish archives the list of them is preserved, showing only twenty-nine and giving their names as Jinfo, Allon (Ah Long), Arton (Ah Tong) etc., etc.

The next day Colnett prepared to depart as soon as certain supplies which the Spaniards had agreed to furnish were received. Martinez's conduct now became vacillating—sometimes he said the vessel might go and then again he changed his mind. In the end he asked for Colnett's papers, which the latter accordingly took on board the *Princessa*. Now a dispute arose, a trifling misunderstanding, apparently caused by both parties standing upon their dignity, and possibly inflamed by erroneous interpretation. Each commander seems to have lost his temper and after mutual recriminations, Martinez ordered Colnett under arrest and his vessel under seizure. In his official report he claims that this action was necessary as otherwise Colnett would have built a trading post elsewhere, from which it would have been impossible to eject him except by force.

The Spaniards at once took possession of the *Argonaut*; the British flag was hauled down and the Spanish flag hoisted. Such of her stores and supplies as the Spaniards required they took; though there appears to have been an undertaking that these would be accounted for if the vessel were not condemned by the Viceroy. Of the fifty-eight persons brought by the *Argonaut*, some of the English were to be sent on her to San Blas, and the remainder, later, on the *Aranzazu*.

On July 13th, as the *Argonaut* with her captives and her prize crew was ready to sail for San Blas, the *Princess Royal* returned to Nootka. After leaving the sound on July 2nd she had encountered a storm which drove her far to the southward and making her way back again, Hudson concluded, when opposite Nootka, to run in and ascertain if the *Argonaut* had arrived. Leaving the vessel in the offing he put off in the launch. When he boarded the *Princessa* he found himself a prisoner. On his refusal to order the *Princess Royal* to enter the trap at Nootka the Spaniards prepared to capture her by force, and, seeing resistance useless, he ordered his lieutenant to surrender the vessel, which was accordingly done. The Spaniards took possession and she was towed into the sound.







SPANISH INSULT TO THE BRITISH FLAG AT NOOTKA SOUND. 1789  
Seizure of Captain Colnett of the British ship "Argonaut," by Don Esteban Martinez, Spanish commandant



Martinez immediately sent the *Argonaut* and the *Princess Royal* to Mexico as prizes. His reason for seizing the latter, which he had less than a fortnight previously allowed to depart the port, was very weak. He says he feared that she would carry to Macao the news of the seizure of the others. But this is flimsily transparent, as he sent a large number of the captured sailors back to China in the American vessel *Columbia* which left the sound about the end of July.

Colnett complained bitterly of his treatment on the voyage to Mexico; he was locked in his room each night at 8 o'clock and the door was not opened till morning; when he desired a drink of water during the night his request was refused and he was compelled to endure his thirst until the morning. His men also were closely confined and kept in irons on the voyage.<sup>13</sup> The *Argonaut* reached San Blas on August 15th and on the 27th the *Princess Royal* arrived with twelve English and two Portuguese prisoners. After their arrival they received more humane treatment, though still in confinement. On December 6th, Martinez returned to San Blas, having spent the interval in exploration of the coast and in learning more about its inhabitants.

With the troubles of Colnett in Mexico we have no concern. The *Argonaut* remained in Mexican waters, employed in the service of the Government, but the *Princess Royal*, now known by the Spanish name *Princesa Real*, sailed northward with the expedition from Mexico in 1790 under Elisa. In May, 1790, Revilla Gigedo, who had succeeded Florez, ordered the *Argonaut* to be returned to the possession of Colnett and that the *Princess Royal* be also re-delivered to him. The prisoners in Mexico were released. The remainder of the captured seamen had reached Macao long prior to this time. This action says the official Spanish document was "the result of pure generosity." Revilla Gigedo's order at first directed that Colnett was not again to enter any place on the Spanish-American coasts, either for the purpose of settlement or of trade with the natives, but later at Colnett's earnest solicitation this embargo was withdrawn and he was given permission to touch at places not under the control of Spain.

Towards the beginning of winter, 1790, Colnett sailed from Mexico in the *Argonaut*.<sup>14</sup> When he arrived at Nootka the *Princess*

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<sup>13</sup> Colnett's Voyage, pp. 98, 99.

<sup>14</sup> Colnett's Voyage, p. 101.  
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*Royal* was not there, but he ultimately obtained possession of her at the Sandwich Islands. The *North West America* or *Gertrudis*, as the Spaniards had re-named her, after being used by them in trading and exploring passed over to the possession of the English about the same time. The details of the movements of these vessels will be dealt with in the consideration of the Spanish settlement at Nootka in 1790 and of the various exploring expeditions of 1789, 1790, 1791, and 1792.

It is necessary to turn now to the diplomatic action which these incidents brought forth. In the language of Professor Manning whose monograph on the Nootka Sound Controversy is a classic: "The whole episode to this point seems to have been a series of blunders and would not merit careful consideration had not the consequences been so serious for the home Governments."<sup>15</sup>

No news of the stirring events of June reached England until January 4, 1790, when Anthony Merry, the British *Chargé d'affaires* at Madrid, sent to the Foreign office a confused account based on the rumors then current in the Spanish capital. The gist of it was that a small Spanish man-of-war had captured in the port of Nootka an English ship which had come for the purpose of making a settlement and that the captured vessel had been manned with Spanish seamen and sent as a prize to Mexico.<sup>16</sup> The very vagueness of the information allowed the Ministers, who, like the populace, were ever prone to hatred of the Spaniard, to fill in the details from imagination. Manifestly the incident lost nothing by drawing from this source. Nevertheless, no step was taken. The first official information from Spain was the following letter from the Marquis del Campo, dated February 10, 1790:

"My Lord: Continuing the frequent expeditions which the King, my master, has ordered to be made to the northern coasts of California, the Viceroy of Mexico sent two ships, under the orders of Don Estevan José Martinez, ensign of the navy, to make a permanent settlement in the port of San Lorenzo, situated about the fiftieth degree of latitude, and named by foreigners 'Nootka' or 'Nioka,' of which possession had formerly been taken. He arrived there the 24th of last June. In giving his account to the Viceroy, M. Mar-

<sup>15</sup> Nootka Sound Controversy, p. 361.

<sup>16</sup> Narrative of Negotiations between England and Spain, p. 1.



tinez said that he found there an American frigate and sloop, which had sailed from Boston to make a tour of the world. He also found a packet-boat and another vessel belonging to a Portuguese established at Macao, whence they had sailed with a passport from the Governor of that port. He announced also that on the 2d of July there arrived another packet-boat from Macao. This was English and came to take possession of Nootka in the name of the British King. She carried a sloop in pieces on board.

"This simple recital will have convinced your excellency of the necessity in which the Court of Madrid finds itself of asking His Britannic Majesty to punish such undertakings in a manner to restrain his subjects from continuing them on these lands which have been occupied and frequented by the Spaniards for so many years. I say this to your excellency as an established fact, and as a further argument against those who attribute to Captain Cook the discovery of the said port of San Lorenzo. I add that the same Martinez in charge of the last expedition was there under commission in August of 1774. This was almost four years before the appearance of Cook. This same Martinez left in the hands of the Indians two silver spoons, some shells, and some other articles which Cook found. The Indians still keep them, and these facts, with the testimony of the Indians, served M. Martinez to convince the English captain.

"The English prisoners have been liberated through the consideration which the King has for His Britannic Majesty, and which he has carefully enjoined upon his viceroys to govern their actions in unforeseen events. His Majesty flatters himself that the Court of St. James will certainly not fail to give the strictest orders to prevent such attempts in the future, and, in general, everything that could trouble the good harmony happily existing between the two crowns. Spain on her side engages to do the same with respect to her subjects.

"I have the honour to be, etc.,

"THE MARQUIS DEL CAMPO.<sup>17</sup>

"His Excellency M. the DUKE OF LEEDS."

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The inaccuracies herein are plainly apparent and need not be dwelt upon. The naïve suggestion that Great Britain should punish her subjects for trading and making settlements on the Northwest

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<sup>17</sup> Manning's *Nootka Sound Controversy*, pp. 367, 368.





coast of America drew from the Marquis of Leeds a reply that, "as yet no precise information has been received relative to the events mentioned in your excellency's letter, but while awaiting such I have His Majesty's orders to inform your excellency that the act of violence spoken of in your letter as having been committed by M. Martinez in seizing a British vessel under the circumstances reported makes it necessary henceforth to suspend all discussions of the pretensions set forth in that letter until a just and adequate satisfaction shall have been made for a proceeding so injurious to Great Britain. In the first place it is indispensable that the vessel in question shall be restored. To determine the details of the ultimate satisfaction which may be found necessary more ample information must be awaited concerning all the circumstances of the affair."<sup>18</sup>

This brusque reply came as a shock to the Spanish diplomats. It is interesting to note that at this very time Colonel Ferdinand Miranda, the South American agitator, was in England and in close touch with Pitt, before whom he had just laid his grand scheme for the new empire in South America, embracing all that continent except Brazil and Guiana. In the event of war the opportunity would be afforded to shear Spain of her possessions in the new world, their unprotected condition offering a fine mark for combination with the revolutionist element which is indigenous to those latitudes.

Floridablanca, the Prime Minister of Spain, regarded the answer as an indication that Pitt was using the incident merely as an excuse to pick a quarrel. His subsequent conduct lends colour to the view that Pitt had at the inception determined to humble the power of Spain which under Carlos III and Carlos IV was regaining the important position she had occupied under Philip II. "Satisfaction previous to discussion" was his demand—a demand peculiarly distasteful to the high-strung Spaniard. The advisers of the Spanish monarch hurriedly took stock of their martial equipment.<sup>19</sup> They found forty-five ships of the line and thirty-two frigates ready for immediate commission, and in addition twenty-four of the former class and seven of the latter could be made available in a short time. Feverish preparations for war were commenced in Spain, though every effort was made to preserve a peaceable external appearance.

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<sup>18</sup> Arch. Hist. Nacional Madrid, See Estado, 4291.

<sup>19</sup> Id.



Late in March Spain sent a reply ignoring the demand for satisfaction as a condition precedent to the discussion of the question and stating that being convinced that nothing but ignorance of Spain's incontestable right to the exclusive sovereignty, navigation, and commerce of the territory, coasts, and seas in question could have induced British subjects to resort thereto, the Viceroy had liberated the vessel and her crew, and that having instructed him to avoid even the least act which might give offense the incident was regarded as closed. The note expressed the hope that the British King would order his subjects to respect Spanish rights and that it would not be necessary to enter into discussions regarding the indubitable rights of his Crown.<sup>20</sup>

Up to this point the controversy had proceeded on the assumption that only one ship had been captured. The Spanish authorities had reports showing the actual occurrences at Nootka, but either through carelessness or for some other reason neglected to make them known. In April, Meares arrived on the scene—*Deus ex machina*. Till this moment the British had only the information from the Spanish Foreign Office and the confused account that Merry had sent. Meares soon placed before the King his celebrated Memorial—a document more useful to stir the public mind to war with Spain than as a statement of facts. Exaggerated, contradictory, intentionally false, it exists to this day a complete proof of his mendacity. And behind it the motive, mean and sordid, to fill the pockets of himself and his co-adventurers with a large money payment wrested from Spain in the heat of blood. The plain truth has already been stated; it makes a strong case against the Spaniard. In any other time the exaggerations, the unwarranted inferences, the imputations of dishonesty, of duplicity, of insolence, and of deliberate cruelty with which it abounds would have carried their own condemnation. But the Ministry were excited; the war spirit was rampant.

The Memorial is dated April 30, 1790. On that very evening the Cabinet resolved to demand "an immediate and adequate satisfaction for the outrages committed by Monsieur de Martinez; and that it would be proper in order to support that demand and be prepared for such events as may arise that Your Majesty should give orders for fitting out a squadron of ships of the line."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Arch. Hist. Nacional Madrid; Narrative of Negotiations between England and Spain, p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Manning's Nootka Sound, p. 376.



Until the beginning of May the greatest secrecy prevailed. No inkling of the trouble had escaped. The country consequently received a rude shock when on the morning of May 5th it was learned that a press of seamen had occurred the preceding night and that the nation was on the verge of war with Spain. The next day the King sent a message to Parliament that two British vessels and two others whose nationality had not been fully ascertained had been captured at Nootka by an officer commanding two Spanish ships of war, their cargoes seized and their officers and crews sent as prisoners to a Spanish port. The correspondence which had occurred was summarized and Parliament informed that no satisfaction had been offered; that moreover "a direct claim is asserted by the Court of Spain to the exclusive rights of sovereignty, navigation, and commerce in the territories, coasts, and seas in that part of the world."<sup>22</sup> After stating that the Minister at Madrid was to renew the demand for satisfaction, His Majesty went on to say that learning that Spain was preparing for war he had taken similar steps and then appealed to the Commons for the necessary supply.

Parliament unanimously supported the address in reply; and on June 10th £1,000,000 was voted "to enable His Majesty to act as the exigency of affairs might require."<sup>23</sup> Preparations for war went vigorously forward. The introduction to Vancouver's Voyage tells of "the uncommon celerity and unparalleled dispatch which attended the equipment of the noblest fleet that Great Britain ever saw."<sup>24</sup> This is known as "The Spanish Armament, 1790." The populace were greatly excited. War with Spain appealed strongly to the nation. Old scores and very recent ones would now be settled. The literature of the day is filled with pamphlets in which the high handed acts of Spain at Nootka and at the Falkland Islands twenty years before are set forth with many additions calculated to inflame the public mind. A rare print showing the seizure of Captain Colnett is reproduced herewith. Its absolute historical inaccuracy is an index to the public knowledge of events at Nootka.

The Triple Alliance was then in existence, and in accordance with its terms Great Britain called upon Holland and Prussia for assistance. The Dutch generously responded with ten sail of the

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<sup>22</sup> Manning's Nootka Sound, p. 381.

<sup>23</sup> Parliamentary History, xxviii, p. 784.

<sup>24</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Vol. 1, p. 48; ed., 1801.



line. Prussia engaged to fulfil her obligations under the treaty if war should occur. The various colonies were notified of the strained relations with Spain and ordered to be prepared for defence. Four regiments of foot and two ships of war were ordered to the West Indies.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time Spain was looking for support. The Family Compact of 1761 bound the Bourbon sovereigns to an alliance offensive and defensive and naturally Spain's chief reliance was therefore upon France. In response to the overtures of Spain, Louis XVI ordered an armament of fourteen ships of the line. The States General, then under the control of the *Tiers état*, when informed of this action entered into a lengthy theoretical discussion upon the question whether the right to make war and peace was in the King or in the people. In the end the King's action was approved as a precautionary measure but Floridablanca was informed by Montmorin, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, that, while Spain could rely upon the King, the Assembly was a doubtful factor and in view of this condition he suggested that peace should be maintained.<sup>26</sup> On June 16th Spain made formal application to France for the assistance guaranteed by the Family Compact, but Montmorin replied that the Assembly having declared that the right to make peace and war was in the people, the King, Louis XVI, must submit the demand to that body. It was plain to Spain that no aid could be obtained in that quarter and a change took place in her diplomatic tone.

A lengthy circular letter had, on June 4th, been sent by Spain to the different Courts of Europe recounting the origin of the dispute and the negotiations with Great Britain. The right of Spain to the sovereignty, navigation, and exclusive commerce of the continent and islands of the South Sea was explained to be limited and to refer only to the continent, islands, and seas discovered by Spain and secured by treaties and uniformly acquiesced in by the nations of the world.<sup>27</sup> The desire to maintain peace was expressed and it was suggested that the menacing tone of the British Government indicated that the subject was being used merely as a pretext to break with Spain.

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<sup>25</sup> Manning's Nootka Sound, pp. 386, 387.

<sup>26</sup> Montmorin to Floridablanca, Arch. Hist. Nacional Madrid, See Estado, 4038.

<sup>27</sup> Greenhow Hist., App. D.





While warlike preparations were proceeding and both countries were seeking support for the expected struggle the diplomats continued their exertions. The British sent Alleyne Fitzherbert as Ambassador to Madrid, as it was found unsatisfactory to carry on the negotiations in London. It would serve no useful purpose to deal closely with the correspondence that ensued. For a time each nation stood its ground, for in this contest they represented two antagonistic conceptions. It was far indeed from being merely a fight for the "cat-skins of Nootka" as the anonymous author of the *Letters on the Errors of the British Minister in the negotiation with the Court of Spain* calls it.<sup>28</sup> The Spaniard clung to the antiquated notion that because his subjects had been the first of Europeans to see the Pacific Ocean all lands washed by its waters were the possessions of Spain. This natural title, to his mind unassailable, became indefeasible by the gift of Pope Alexander VI, whose Bull of May, 1493, had confirmed to Spain all lands discovered or thereafter to be discovered by the Spaniards in the Western Ocean. The Briton, since the days of the Tudors, had acted upon the principle that mere discovery is only an inchoate title and that lands not controlled by any civilized nation become the territorial possession of the people first occupying and developing them.<sup>29</sup> As for the Papal Bull, the reply of Queen Elizabeth, two hundred years before, crystallized the sentiments of the nation: "That she could not persuade herself that they possessed any just title by the Bishop of Rome's donation, in whom she acknowledged no prerogative in such cases, so as to lay any tie upon princes who owed him no obedience."<sup>30</sup>

Matters gradually assumed a less belligerent tone. How far the peace terminating the war between Sweden and Russia, leaving the latter power free to prosecute her attacks on Britain's old ally, Turkey, and how far the existing internal difficulties in The Netherlands may have aided in this pacific movement it is not necessary to enquire. Britain now submitted a memorial in which, after declaring that a peaceful settlement was desired, it was stated that no negotiation to that end could be undertaken until the vessels were restored, Meares indemnified, and satisfaction given for the insult to the British flag.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> Manning's *Nootka Sound*, pp. 377, 378.

<sup>30</sup> Speech of Senator Colquitt, February 17, 1846, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Fitzherbert to Floridablanca, June 13, 1790; *Annual Register*, xxxii, p. 298.



From June 13th, when this document was submitted, until July 24th, the diplomats discussed the questions. Fitzherbert's instructions said that in the opinion of the Foreign Office the satisfaction when given would necessarily imply that Spain was "not in possession of an actual, known, and acknowledged Sovereignty and Dominion at Nootka" which could justify her action, and that therefore no discussion upon this point could take place after the satisfaction; then in lengthy and verbose phrase the Foreign Office went on to say that neither could any discussion take place before the satisfaction which could convince Britain of Spain's sovereignty at Nootka.<sup>32</sup> Thus it appears that Pitt, acting in this somewhat unreasonable manner, was determined that the abandonment of the Spanish claim of sovereignty must be the price of peace. With these instructions was enclosed a draft of declaration and counter-declaration almost identical with those which passed between Fitzherbert and Floridablanca on July 24th. By the declaration, as signed, Spain acknowledged her willingness to give satisfaction for the injury complained of—the capture of Meares's vessels—to make full restitution and to indemnify the interested parties for the losses sustained thereby. Thus it appears that the "satisfaction" about which so much had been said, which had been so strenuously claimed on the one side and refused on the other, was simply an apology. This declaration was accepted by counter-declaration on the same day and the dark war clouds began to break.

During all this time the "Spanish Armament" lay at Spithead, ready to stand out into the Atlantic upon the shortest notice; Admiral Cornish with eight ships of the line had already set sail and, favoured by an easterly wind, was clear of the Channel. The Dutch fleet of ten sail of the line under Admiral Kinsbergen was also at sea ready to coöperate. A detachment of the Guards to the number of two thousand men were under orders to march to Portsmouth and every preparation had been made to facilitate their prompt embarkation.<sup>33</sup> When it was learned that Admiral Cornish had sailed, the Spanish fleet at Cadiz was ordered to sea, and for a time these two fleets were hovering near Cape Finisterre dangerously near each other. Two Spanish ships of war carrying one thousand soldiers were sent to Porto

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<sup>32</sup> July 5, 1790, Leeds to Fitzherbert, British Museum MSS., 34432, pp. 32-36.

<sup>33</sup> Events 1780 to 1790, p. 174.



Rico, where it was apprehended an early attack would be made. By July 20th, Spain had thirty-four ships of the line and sixteen smaller craft at sea.

Early in September Fitzherbert presented to Floridablanca the first *projet* of a treaty.<sup>34</sup> And again the arguments and counter-arguments, the proposals and counter-proposals, the disputes over words and phrases, continued for more than a month. The action of the National Assembly of France in reply to the demand for aid in suggesting a re-casting of the Family Compact, showed to the world that while Britain could rely on her allies, Spain stood alone. The people of England began to complain of the inordinate length of the negotiations and the consequent period of uncertainty. The firmness with which Britain had entered upon the matter foreshadowed immediate satisfaction or war; but, now, nearly eight months had elapsed, immense expense had been incurred, yet nothing tangible had been obtained. These two forces caused the Ministry to be inconsistent that the treaty which had been altered and resubmitted on October 15th should be arranged within ten days.<sup>35</sup> The Junta, whose advice was taken, were of opinion that the fortunes of war should be tried, declaring that its terms were so drastic that nothing further could be demanded at the end of an unsuccessful war. Floridablanca, however, continued the discussion and succeeded in obtaining small concessions here and there. The treaty with these changes was presented to Floridablanca on October 23rd. When that day's conference closed, the Spanish Minister declared that he was still in doubt whether the reply he should give the next morning would be for peace or for war. King Carlos IV, however, was satisfied and, on October 28, 1790, was signed the Nootka Sound Convention. So important is this document in our history, and so much has it been misunderstood that it is presented in full in the appendix to this work.

Like most compromises this treaty was strongly approved and strongly condemned in England and in Spain. In the former country the opposition led by Fox declared that it had cut down the national rights, claiming that theretofore Britain had had the right to settle in any part of America not fortified against her by previous occupancy, but now that right was limited; so too the navigation,

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<sup>34</sup> Narrative, p. 168.

<sup>35</sup> Narrative, pp. 257-285.



fishery, and commerce of the Pacific, before without restriction, were subject to the limitations of the treaty. The fact that Spain had always denied any such rights was not in their opinion material. Hence her partial waiver was no adequate return for the restrictions now placed on British subjects. In Spain the treaty was distasteful to the national pride and was regarded as a breaking away from time-honoured views. The enemies of Floridablanca would not be satisfied with his explanations, nor with his suggestion that it was only a temporary expedient owing to the inadvisability of resorting to the arbitrament of the sword in the present unhappy condition of Spain. So insistent were they that in February, 1792, Floridablanca was dismissed from office after fifteen years of faithful service. His fall was attributed to the Nootka Sound Convention.

To the world at large this treaty was the first external evidence of the ebb of the tide—the beginning of the collapse of the Spanish colonial system. It was the first express renunciation of Spain's ancient claim to exclusive sovereignty, navigation, commerce, and fisheries on the Pacific Coast of America.

The treaty itself does not deal with sovereignty at all. Beyond the engagement to restore the buildings and land and to indemnify Meares for his losses, it deals only with navigation, fishery, and commerce in the Pacific and the forming of settlements on its shores. The satisfaction given by Spain in July, 1790, is the abandonment of her claim to sovereignty in this latitude, for it was an admission that Martinez was in the wrong in seizing the vessels, which he would not have been, had the territory been subject to Spain. But neither the treaty nor the declaration ever transferred or attempted to transfer the abandoned Spanish sovereignty. In the result the settlement of the Nootka difficulty left this Northwest coast (at least so far as related to the undefined territory beyond the line which international law would allow Spain to claim as hers under the doctrine of proximity) a land without sovereignty in any European state, a sort of no-man's-land to which title could be acquired by entering into possession and exercising dominion over it. This position is important to be borne in mind because of its connection with the Oregon Dispute nearly sixty years later.

The provision for the restoration of the land and buildings at Nootka falls properly into the consideration of the work of Capt.





George Vancouver on this coast and will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

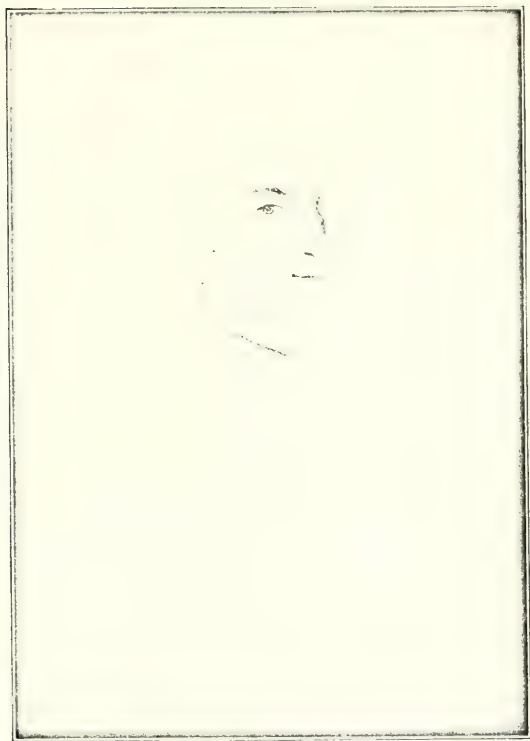
The compensation which Spain had agreed to make was referred to commissioners to adjust, and after the usual delays a convention was signed by Don Manuel de las Heras on behalf of Spain, and Mr. Ralph Woodford on behalf of Great Britain, at London on February 12, 1793, whereby Spain agreed to pay to the interested parties "two hundred and ten thousand hard dollars in specie" in full of all damages. Meares in his Memorial had with his usual exaggeration claimed \$153,433 as actual losses and \$500,000 as probable losses.<sup>36</sup> To reach these figures he had, for instance, valued all sea-otter skins at \$100 apiece, though as Dixon in his Remarks pointed out the average price of all such skins obtained on this coast since the time of Captain Hanna (1785) was but \$29 1/6;<sup>37</sup> Meares further estimated that the *Iphigenia*, *North West America*, and *Princess Royal* would have collected a thousand skins each and the *Argonaut* two thousand skins, even though in the preceding year the combined result of the work of the *Felice* and the *Iphigenia* had been but seven hundred and fifty skins, which had been sold at an average, as he (Meares) claimed, of \$50 each.<sup>38</sup> In this connection it must not be overlooked that the *Iphigenia* had only been under seizure for about a fortnight and Meares had in hand her returns; this, however, did not prevent him from claiming them over again. It may therefore be safely concluded that the amount paid by Spain was a very liberal allowance and far exceeded any actual losses.

<sup>36</sup> Meares' Memorial, App. 14.

<sup>37</sup> Dixon's Remarks on Meares' Voyage, pp. 11, 12.

<sup>38</sup> Answer to Dixon, pp. 22, 23.





CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER, R. N.



## CHAPTER VIII

### CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER

Some months before news of the capture of the British vessels at Nootka Sound had reached England, the Government had determined to continue the survey of the Northwest coast, so well begun by Captain Cook. Henry Roberts, who had served under that great navigator, was offered and accepted command of the expedition. George Vancouver, who also had sailed with Cook as midshipman, was commissioned to accompany Roberts as second in command. However, just as preparations were nearing completion, word reached the Government of the Nootka trouble. It appeared, at first, that neither Great Britain nor Spain would submit to the demands of the other. Both countries actively prepared for war and, for the time being, the second British expedition to the Northwest coast was abandoned, in order that the officers and men might be drafted into the vessels then being commissioned for active service. Spain, as related in the preceding chapter, was in no position to engage in hostilities and before the autumn of 1790 the Nootka Convention had been arranged and peaceful relations restored.

The Nootka dispute was no sooner settled than the British Government again turned its attention to western American affairs. Vancouver was given command of the postponed expedition, Roberts being engaged elsewhere. The *Discovery*, a new sloop of three hundred and forty tons, originally designed for the service, was recommissioned. She was to be accompanied by the armed tender *Chatham*, of one hundred and thirty-five tons, in command of Lieutenant William Robert Broughton. Great care was exercised in preparing the vessels for their long voyage. As in the case of Cook's ships, the stores supplied were of the best that the arsenals could produce.

In accordance with the terms of the Nootka Convention, Vancouver was clothed with authority to receive from the Spanish officer



he was to meet at Nootka, the lands and houses that Meares claimed had been wrested from him in May, 1789. He was also to explore the Northwest coast of America, between the parallels of 30 degrees and 60 degrees, north latitude. In his examination Vancouver was to take particular pains to keep in view:

"1st, The acquiring accurate information with respect to the nature and extent of any water communication, which may tend in any considerable degree, to facilitate an intercourse, for the purposes of commerce, between the North-West coast, and the countries upon the opposite side of the continent, which are inhabited or occupied by His Majesty's subjects."

"2ndly, The ascertaining, with as much precision as possible, the number, extent, and situation of any settlements which have been made within the limits above mentioned, by any European nation, and the time when such settlement was first made."<sup>1</sup>

With respect to the first, it was deemed of great importance that it should be definitely settled whether any of the inlets or fiords recently discovered, or that might be discovered, communicated with the Atlantic; or if there were any large rivers communicating with the lakes discovered by the French and British furtraders in the heart of the continent. Men still clung to the false theories respecting that *ignis fatuus*, the Strait of Anian, which for so many years had exercised the minds of geographers and led them to believe all manner of strange stories of that mysterious northern way. Cook's voyage, although it had done much to rob these false theories of their vogue, at least among British men of science, had not by any means killed belief in the Strait of Anian. Meares had endeavoured to revive interest in the ancient relations, and his positive assertions for a time influenced the opinion of some geographers; and just at this time Buache, the French geographer, astonished Europe by proving, to his own satisfaction at least, that the strait of the charlatan Maldonado was not a figment of the imagination but a reality. So Vancouver was instructed to lay at rest once and forever all such crude theories respecting navigable rivers and straits that by long and sinuous passages connected the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. British geographers of that generation were not impressed with Maldonado or de Fonte; nor did they believe in the existence of their chains of lakes and rivers.

<sup>1</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 1, p. XVIII.





The romance of the Elizabethan era could not flourish in the materialistic Georgian period. Already the golden age of discovery had passed, and no longer were the extravagant tales of the quack explorer received with credulous regard. In fact, the material view of the Georgian period had suppressed the romantic and placed on high the politico-economic. In that age Samuel Purchas and his accounts of the "silver bowels" and "golden entrails" of America, and such picturesque descriptions deceived no one.

In view of the fact that the officer placed in command of the expedition failed to find the two principal rivers of western America, the Columbia and the Fraser, it is interesting to recall that he was specifically instructed not only to ascertain the general line of the sea coast, "but also the direction and extent of all such considerable inlets, whether made by arms of the sea, or by the mouths of large rivers, as may be likely to lead to or facilitate"<sup>2</sup> a communication with the Atlantic.

To all vessels belonging to His Catholic Majesty, Vancouver was to extend every assistance in his power and to avoid giving any offence to the subjects of the Spanish King. It was particularly recommended that the British officer upon meeting with Spanish men of war, should enter into a free and unreserved communication of all charts and discoveries made by him, upon the condition that the Spanish officers should reciprocate the courtesy.

Additional instructions were forwarded by the Admiralty with Lieutenant Hergest, commanding the transport *Daedalus*. These were confined more particularly to the procedure to be followed at Nootka Sound in the surrender of the "buildings," and "districts," or "parcels of land," recently seized by the Spaniards and to the movements of the transport. With the additional instructions a letter was transmitted from Count Floridablanca, dated the 12th of May, 1791, and addressed to the Governor or Commander of the "Port at St. Lawrence," instructing that officer to immediately surrender the lands at Nootka Sound and Port Cox, claimed by the British.

Yet another note of instruction was despatched to Vancouver, but this was merely the usual formal order that he should repair to London immediately on his return, to lay before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty a full account of his voyage, and to take care, before

<sup>2</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 1, p. XIX.



leaving the sloop "to demand from the officers, and petty officers, the log books, journals, drawings, etc., they may have kept, and to seal them up for our inspection; and enjoining them, and the whole crew not to divulge where they had been until they shall have permission to do so."<sup>3</sup>

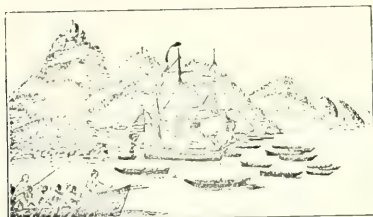
The *Chatham* and *Discovery* sailed from Falmouth the 1st of April, 1791, and after a long passage, in the course of which New Holland, Van Diemen's Land, and New Zealand were visited, the vessels arrived at the Sandwich Islands in January, 1792. Departing thence in March, Vancouver sighted the coast of New Albion on the 17th of April, in latitude  $39^{\circ}27'$ . "The shore appeared straight and unbroken, of a moderate height, with mountainous land behind, covered with stately forest trees; except in some spots, which had the appearance of having been cleared by manual labour; and exhibited a verdant, agreeable aspect."<sup>4</sup>

Vancouver directed his course along the coast to the northward, keeping within sight of land and determining the position of its various capes and bays. Off Cape Orford the vessels were visited by the natives in canoes and the explorer observes that "a pleasing and courteous deportment distinguished these people." Under the 46th parallel, the Cape Disappointment of Meares was sighted, but, as Meares had done before him, Vancouver failed to observe the great fluvial artery, the estuary of which was discovered a few months later by Captain Gray of the American ship *Columbia*. So much has been said and written of Vancouver's failure to discover the opening, found shortly afterwards by the American captain, that exceptional interest is added to the British explorer's observations with regard to the land sighted on Friday, the 29th of April. "Noon brought us up," so runs the journal, "with a very conspicuous point of land composed of a cluster of hummocks, moderately high, and projecting into the sea from the low land before mentioned. These hummocks are barren, and steep near the sea, but their tops thinly covered with wood. On the south side of this promontory was the appearance of an inlet, or small river, the land behind not indicating it to be of any great extent; nor did it seem accessible for vessels of our burthen, as the breakers extended from the above point 2 or 3 miles into the ocean, until they

<sup>3</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 1, p. XXVIII.

<sup>4</sup> Id., p. 196.





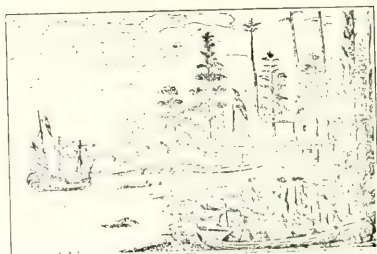
After an old Drawing by Davidson

**IN THE STRAITS OF JUAN DE FUCA**  
 Captain Gray obliged to fire upon the natives  
 who disregarded his orders to keep off



After one of Davidson's old Drawings

**AT THE FALKLAND ISLANDS**  
 Captain Gray with chart in hand, conversing  
 with one of his officers



After an old Drawing by Davidson

**IN WINTER QUARTERS AT CLAYOQUOT**  
 Captain Gray giving orders to Mr. Yendell con-  
 cerning the building of the sloop  
 "Adventure"



After an old Drawing by Davidson

**AT WHAMPOA**  
 Captain Gray, facing the ships, converses with  
 a friend upon the discovery of Oregon



joined those on the beach nearly four leagues further south. On reference to Mr. Meares's description of the coast south of this promontory, I was at first inclined to believe it to be Cape Shoalwater, but on ascertaining its latitude, I presumed it to be that which he calls Cape Disappointment; and the opening to the south of it, Deception Bay." <sup>5</sup> So Vancouver missed the mouth of the Columbia River.

Passing Point Grenville and Barkley's Destruction Island, Vancouver reached the latitude in which geographers of more than a century and a half had placed the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Dalrymple, the cartographer, in his rare pamphlet entitled "Plan for Promoting the Fur Trade," published in 1789, states that "it is alledged that the Spaniards have recently found an entrance in the latitude of  $47^{\circ}45'$  north, which in 27 days course brought them to the vicinity of Hudson's Bay; this latitude exactly corresponds to the ancient relation of John de Fuca, the Greek pilot in 1592." Here, by a coincidence as strange as it was fortunate, Vancouver fell in with the *Columbia*, commanded by Captain Robert Gray. Having read Meares' account of the voyage of the sloop *Washington* behind Nootka, he was naturally anxious to hear more of the discoveries made on that occasion. Puget and Menzies were sent on board to acquire "such information as might be serviceable in our future operations." On the return of the boat Vancouver learned that Gray had commanded the sloop *Washington* in 1789 at the time she was supposed to have made a singular voyage behind Nootka. "It was not a little remarkable," observed Vancouver, "that, on our approach to the entrance of this inland sea, we should fall in with the identical person, who, it had been stated, had sailed through it. His relation, however, differed very materially from that published in England. It is not possible to conceive anyone to be more astonished than was Captain Gray, on his being made acquainted, that his authority had been quoted, and the track pointed out that he had been said to have made in the sloop *Washington*. In contradiction to which, he assured the officers, that he had penetrated only 50 miles into the Straits in question, in an E. S. E. direction; that he found the passage 5 leagues wide; and that he understood from the natives that the opening extended a considerable distance to the northward; that this was all the information he had acquired respecting this inland sea, and that he returned into the ocean by the same way he

<sup>5</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. I, pp. 209-10.





had entered at." Gray also gave his visitors information as to his operations on the coast in the winter, relating, among other things, that the Clayoquot chief, Wicaninish, planned to capture his ship by bribing a Sandwich islander on board to wet the priming of his fire-arms, thus to enable the Indians who had assembled for that purpose to overpower the crew. The plot was happily discovered in time to prevent its execution. The ships then parted, the *Discovery* and *Chatham* to the northward, while the *Columbia* followed them, although Gray had stated that it was his intention to proceed southward on a trading cruise.<sup>6</sup>

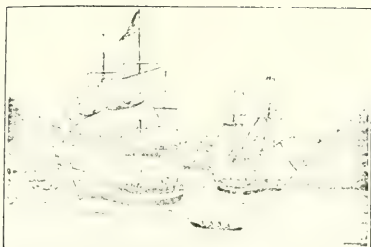
At noon on Sunday, April 29th, the *Discovery* and *Chatham*, the latter in the lead, sailed into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Vancouver in passing gave the name of Classet to the Cape Flattery of Cook. The vessels passed between Tatooshe Island and a large rock, which in honour of Duncan, who had first sketched the entrance of the strait, was named Rock Duncan. Then Vancouver commenced his careful and laborious survey of the great inland sea, studded with islands, that is such a remarkable feature of the coast. Vancouver hugged the continental shore and, proceeding from point to point, at last reached the maze of islands and inlets, to which he gave the name of Puget Sound, in honour of Peter Puget, his second lieutenant. Although the explorer anchored under New Dungeness not far from the Port Angeles of the present day, it is not recorded either in the narrative of the expedition, nor in any other authentic work, that he visited that beautiful park-like country at the southern extremity of Vancouver Island, which fifty years later excited the admiration of Captain McNeill, of the steamer *Beaver*, and James Douglas, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Strictly following the letter of his instructions, Vancouver surveyed, with elaborate care, each bay and harbour, each inlet and sound. The nomenclature of the shores of that mediterranean sea bears ample testimony of his minute examination. With the exception of the names bestowed by the Spaniards in their surveys of the years 1791 and 1792, there is scarcely a large island, bay or sound, or a prominent cape that does not bear the name given it by the British explorer. Vancouver at once and forever disposed of the mystery of the Strait of Anian. Before his investigations Maldonado and De

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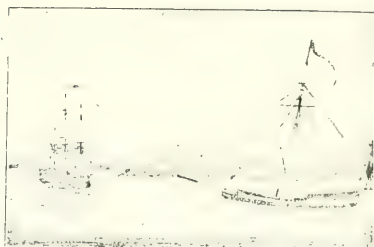
<sup>6</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 1, pp. 214-15.





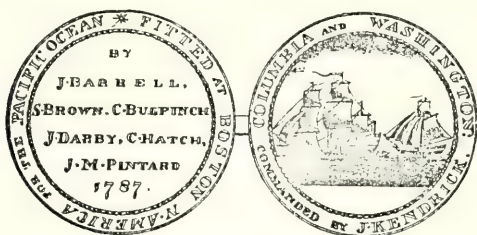
From an old Drawing by Haswell

THE SHIP "COLUMBIA" AND THE BRIG  
"HANCOCK" IN HANCOCK'S RIVER,  
QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S ISLANDS



From an old Drawing by Haswell

THE SHIP "COLUMBIA" AND THE SLOOP  
"WASHINGTON"

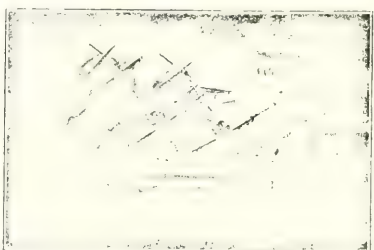


MEDAL STRUCK TO COMMEMORATE THE DEPARTURE  
OF THE "COLUMBIA" AND THE "WASHINGTON"



From an old Drawing by Davidson

THE SHIP "COLUMBIA" SURPRISED BY  
THE NATIVES OF CHICKLESET



From an old Drawing by Davidson

THE "COLUMBIA" IN A SQUALL



Fonte, Juan Ladrillero, and Martin Chake, and all the pretensions of those who had averred their belief in the exploits of these impostors, dissolved into thin air, leaving not a wrack behind. But more than that, Vancouver not only laid at rest these stories, but he was the first to establish the insular character of the land occupied by the Spaniards in 1789. Before his day, the Indians had reported to Spaniard and furtrader that behind Nootka lay channels of the sea, and indeed it had been opined that the shores visited by adventurers in their search for the pelt of the sea-otter were not part of the continent, but merely a chain of islands that fringed the coast. Vancouver, however, was the first explorer to establish this fact.

In the evening of April 30th, the *Chatham* and *Discovery* anchored off New Dungeness. Perhaps it was a happy omen that May-Day dawned bright and beautiful. But whether or no, there were any on board superstitious enough to give heed to signs, the fact remains that from that day until the beginning of August, when the vessels sailed into Queen Charlotte's Sound, no serious mishap befell the expedition. Proceeding from New Dungeness, Vancouver sailed through Admiralty Inlet to Puget Sound, thence past Whidby Island, the beautiful San Juan or Haro Archipelago, and, still hugging the continental shore, by Bellingham Bay and Lummi Island into the southern end of the Gulf of Georgia; thence on to Semiahmoo and Boundary Bays, Points Roberts and Grey, to the entrance of Burrard Inlet. Point Grey was so named "in compliment to my friend Captain George Grey of the Navy," and Point Roberts "after my esteemed friend and predecessor in the *Discovery*."<sup>7</sup>

Here again Vancouver failed to find a large river. Between these points the Fraser embouches into the Gulf of Georgia, but although in crossing from one point to the other, the strong current of the river, and its vast sand-banks forced the small boat, in which the explorer was making his examination, far into the Gulf and although it was noticed that the intermediate space was occupied by low land, apparently a swampy flat that extended several miles back from the shore, the river of which this swampy flat was the delta was not discovered. Moreover, it was observed that the water "nearly half over the Gulph, and accompanied by a rapid tide was nearly colourless, which gave us some reason to suppose that the northern branch of the Sound might

<sup>7</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 1, pp. 299-300.



possibly be discovered to terminate in a river of considerable extent." Between Points Grey and Atkinson, Vancouver found the narrow entrance of a long canal, which he examined with care, little thinking that on the shore of this inlet was to arise a great city, destined to be the western metropolis of the greatest Dominion of the British Empire. That inlet was named Burrard's Canal after Sir Harry Burrard.

Following the western shore of the Gulf he had named in honour of the reigning sovereign, George III., Vancouver discovered and explored the inlet named after Sir John Jervis. Returning to Point Grey, where it was the intention to land and breakfast, Vancouver fell in with two little Spanish vessels, the *Sutil* and *Mexicana*, commanded respectively by Don Dionisio Galiano and Don Cayetano Valdez. These vessels proved to be a detachment from the expedition of the accomplished but unfortunate Malaspina, then in the service of Spain. Galiano and Valdez had entered the strait five days after the British expedition, and since that time had been engaged in examining the coasts partly surveyed by Spanish officers in previous years.

Vancouver, who up to that time, had not known that the waters he had explored had been visited by the Spaniards, was not altogether pleased to find this the case. "I cannot avoid acknowledging," he says in his journal, "that, on this occasion, I experienced no small degree of mortification in finding that the external shores of the Gulph had been visited, and already examined a few miles beyond where my researches during the excursion, had extended."<sup>8</sup>

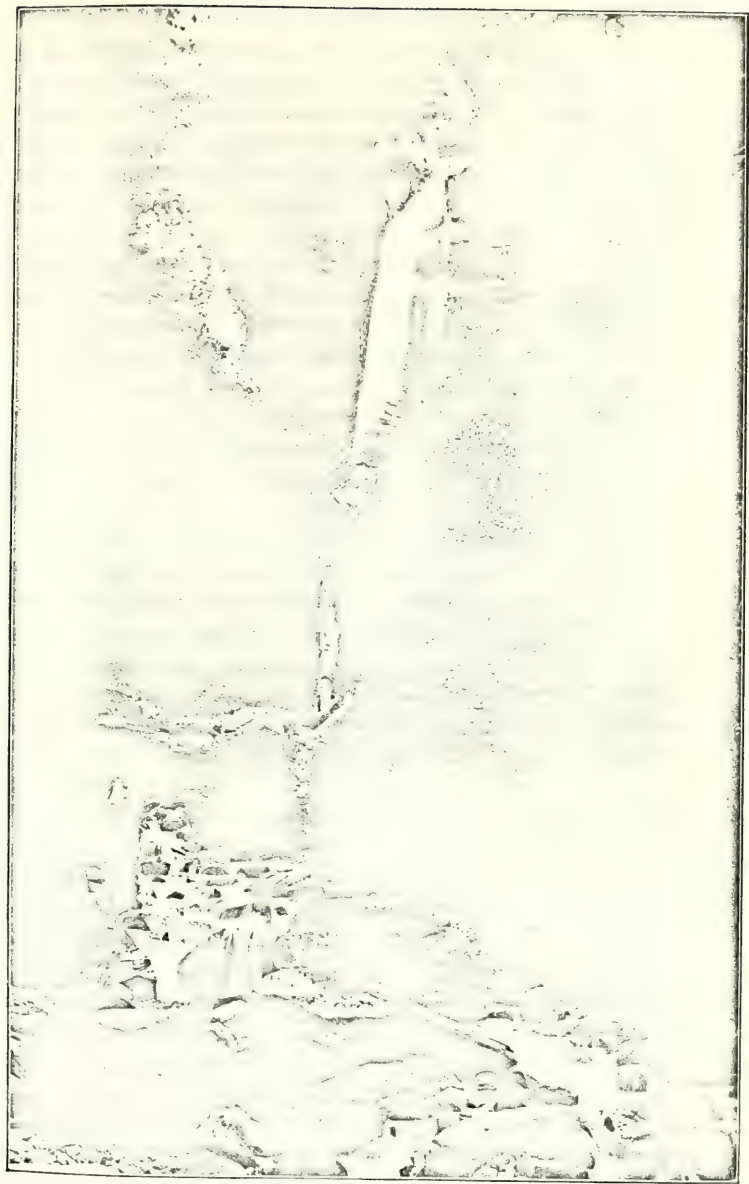
Here on that summer morning of one hundred and twenty years ago, chance caused the two exploring expeditions to meet. In a manner it may be described as an historic occasion, for the one signified the rise of a new power, and the other marked the close of Spanish effort on the Northwest coast. The well equipped British vessels were in marked contrast to the little galleys of Spain. The meeting was observed by an interchange of courtesies between the British and Spanish officers.

Almost the first news imparted to Vancouver was that Bodega y Quadra, the commandant of San Blas in California, was awaiting the arrival of the British Commissioner at Nootka, in order to restore the disputed territory to the Crown of Great Britain, in accordance with

<sup>8</sup> Vancouver, *Voyages*, London, 1798, vol. 1, p. 312.







FALLS AT INDIAN RIVER POST  
Head of North Arm, Burrard Inlet



terms of the Nootka Convention. Vancouver speaks in high terms of the behaviour of the Spanish officers: "Their conduct was replete with that politeness and friendship which characterizes the Spanish nation; every kind of useful information they cheerfully communicated, and obligingly expressed much desire, that circumstances might so concur as to admit of our respective labours being carried on together; for which purpose, or, if from our long absence and fatigue in an open boat, I would wish to remain with my party as their guest, they would immediately despatch a boat with such directions as I might deem necessary for the conduct of the ships, or, in the event of a favourable breeze springing up, they would weigh and sail directly to their station; but, being intent on losing no time, I declined their obliging offers, and having partaken with them a very hearty breakfast, bade them farewell, not less pleased with their hospitality and attention, than astonished at the vessels in which they were employed to execute a service of such a nature. They were each of about forty-five tons burthen, mounted two brass guns, and were navigated by twenty-four men, bearing one lieutenant, without a single inferior officer. Their apartments just allowed room for sleeping places on each side, with a table in the intermediate space, at which four persons with some difficulty, could sit, and were in all other respects, the most ill calculated and unfit vessels that could possibly be imagined for such an expedition; notwithstanding this, it was pleasant to observe, in point of living, they possessed many more comforts than could reasonably have been expected."<sup>9</sup>

The *Sutil* and *Mexicana* were fitted out at Acapulco as an adjunct of Malaspina's expedition in the *Descubierta* and *Atrevida*, but these vessels had sailed before the schooners reached that port. The voyage was undertaken for the purpose of continuing the examination of the Straits of Fuca, commenced by Manuel Quimper, under Don Francisco Eliza, who had been ordered in 1790 to survey that inlet. It is stated in the official narrative of the expedition that Estevan Martinez, in sailing down the coast in the *Santiago* in the year 1774 had sighted a broad entrance a little to the north of the 48th parallel. In the log of the *Santiago*, however, no mention is made of that discovery. The *Sutil* carried Dionisio Galiano, who commanded the expedition, Secundino Salamanca and seventeen men; and the *Mexicana*, Caye-

<sup>9</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 1, pp. 313-14.



tano Valdez, Juan Vernachi, Josef Cordero, draughtsman, and the same complement of men as the *Sutil*. In view of Vancouver's remarks upon the size and equipment, it is interesting to note that the dimensions of each ship were as follows: Keel—46 feet, 10 inches; Length over all—50 feet, 3 inches; Beam—13 feet, 10 inches; Aft-hold—6 feet, 2 inches; Forehold—5 feet, 8 inches. The armament consisted of one three-pounder, four falcons, eighteen muskets, twenty-four pistols, and eighteen sabres.

The *Sutil* and *Mexicana* sailed from the Mexican port on March 8th, and, after a stormy voyage, in which the latter was dismasted, reached Nootka on May 12th, finding there Francisco Eliza, with the frigate *Concepcion*, the *Santa Gertrudis*, Alonso de Torres commander, and the brigantine *Activa*. Bodega y Quadra had arrived but a few days before to carry out the convention concluded between the Spanish Court and that of England in 1790. Galiano's journal throws an interesting light upon the Spanish occupation of Nootka, and especially upon the relations that existed between his countrymen and the natives. "While we were in this port," he writes on one occasion, "we saw with particular gratification the close friendship which reigned between the Spaniards and the Indians. Maquinna, influenced by the presents and good treatment of Commander Quadra, had come to live very near the ships. He ate from the Commander's table daily, and, though not at it, was very near, and used his knife and fork like the most polished European, allowing himself to be waited on by the servants, and amusing everybody by his merry humour. He drank wine with pleasure, and left to others, so as not to muddle his brain, the care of limiting his quantum of that liquor, which he called "Water of Spain." He was usually accompanied by his brother, Quatlazapé, for whom he showed great affection. Some of his relatives and vassals also generally dined in the cabin, and for these latter a dish of beans or haricots, food they most preferred, was set daily. Maquinna was endowed with clear and alert talent, and very well knew his rights of sovereignty. He complained of the treatment of the foreign vessels which traded on the Coast, on account of certain vexations which he said his people had received. He denied that he had ceded the port of Nootka to the English lieutenant, Meares, and only acknowledged that he had allowed him to settle

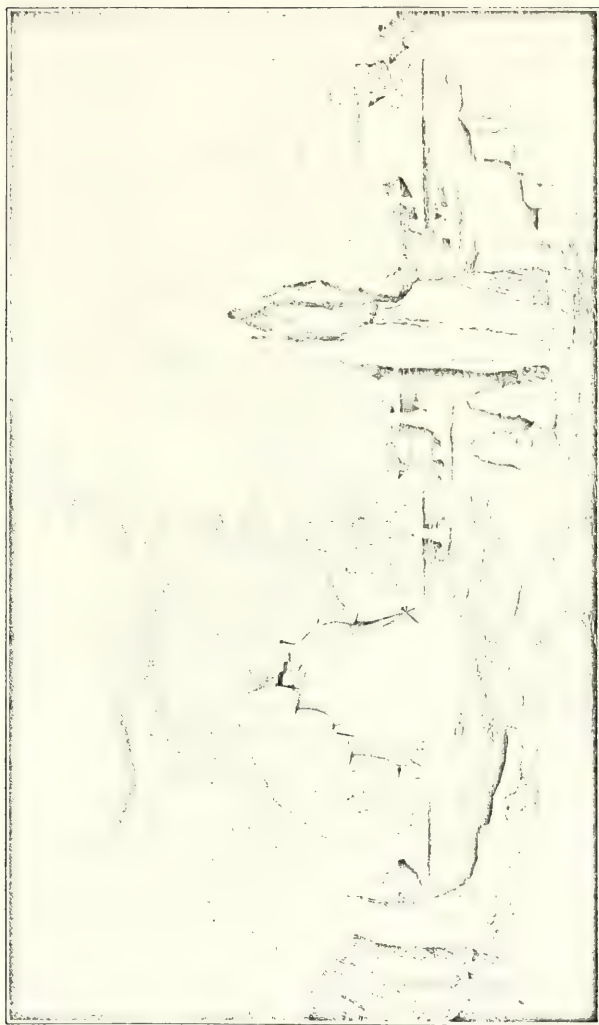




Alejandro Mayans







SPANISH SHIP "ATREVIDA" IN COMMAND OF ALEXANDRO MALASPINA, ON NORTHWEST COAST



there, repeating continually the cession he made to the king of Spain of that port and the stores pertaining to it with all their products.”<sup>10</sup>

The French frigate, *La Flavia*, of about five hundred tons, arrived at Nootka while the *Sutil* and *Mexicana* lay at anchor there. The *Flavia* flew the new national flag which was then seen for the first time on this coast. The object was to trade for furs and to seek information respecting the unfortunate La Pérouse.

The journal also relates that early in June, natives arrived to ask Bodega y Quadra to assist them against a vessel which had attacked a village in Esperanza Inlet, killing seven, wounding others, and despoiling the rest of their otter skins. The Indians brought with them a wounded man to be treated by the Spanish doctor. As far as is known, this vessel was the *Columbia*, commanded by Captain Gray. The natives related that the Americans, being unable to agree upon the rate of exchange for furs, had used force to compel them to surrender their peltries.

Having taken on board Luis Galvez, the surgeon of the *Aranzazu*, the *Sutil* and *Mexicana* sailed for the Straits of Fuca and a few days later came to anchor at the port of Nunez Gaona, now known as Neah Bay, to which place the Spaniards had determined to transfer the settlement at Nootka, in anticipation of the surrender of that port to the British. Salvador Fidalgo, commanding the *Princessa*, was then making preparations for the transfer, clearing a site for an orchard and making yards for the cows, sheep, pigs and goats, brought from San Blas. Nunez Gaona, however, was abandoned shortly afterwards. It seems strange that an effort should have been made to establish a colony at this place, for it was but ill-adapted for settlement. Although Quimper and Francisco Eliza had examined the straits and the inland sea, as far as the Gulf of Georgia, called by the Spanish, “Gran Canal de Nuestra Sonora del Rosario” (Grand Canal of Our Lady of the Rosary), they had not completed their survey.

The work of continuing the exploration of these inland waters had been entrusted to Galiano and he now proceeded to carry out his instructions. He did not, like Vancouver, follow the continental shore, but touched at the Port of Cordova, where now stands the city of Victoria. “The port of Cordova is beautiful,” runs an entry in the

<sup>10</sup> Voyage of *Sutil* and *Mexicana*: Barwick's Translation in archives of British Columbia, pp. 17-18.



journal of June 9th, "and affords good shelter for sailors; but the water is shallow, as we saw, and Tetacus informed us: the land is very irregular, of slight elevation, and, as the neighbourhood shows, the surface of soil on the rock is of little depth. Nevertheless it is fertile, covered with trees and plants, and these growths are almost the same as those of Nootka, but wild roses are most abundant. Also rather more birds are seen and more of the same kind of seagulls, ducks, kingfishers, and other birds. It was in this port that the schooner *Saturnina* had to fire at the canoes of the inhabitants to protect the launch of the Packet *San Carlos*, which came in her company, and which launch they obstinately wanted to seize."<sup>11</sup>

Galiano then made his way through the San Juan or Haro Archipelago, noticing on June 12th, flames to the southeast of Mount Carmel (Mount Baker), which phenomenon was interpreted as indicating the presence of an active volcano in that neighbourhood. In crossing the Gulf of Georgia, two small boats were sighted, which it was thought belonged to the two English ships, known to be exploring the inland sea. The Spanish vessels at this time were making for the Sound of Floridablanca (the Spanish name for the estuary of the Fraser River), in order to search for the river, which was supposed, from the report of the natives, to empty into that bay, but the current prevented them reaching the head of the channel, so they anchored under Punta Langara (Point Grey) and here the British and Spanish expeditions met as already narrated.

Naturally the explorers exchanged notes. Upon Vancouver pointing out the only spot he had left unexamined, at the head of Burrard Inlet, Galiano and Valdez were much surprised that a large river, which they had been told emptied into the waters of the Gulf of Georgia, had not been seen. The mouth of the river is shown on the Spanish chart between the Points Langara and Cepeda, the Spanish names of Points Grey and Roberts of Vancouver. This river had been named Rio Blanca, in honour of Count Floridablanca. It seems almost beyond belief that Vancouver's small boats, for he had left his ships at anchor in order to examine more carefully the bay and inlets of the coast, should have failed to find the mouth of the Fraser River. Yet such was the case.

The *Discovery* and *Chatham* and the *Sutil* and *Mexicana* then

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<sup>11</sup> Voyage of *Sutil* and *Mexicana*: Barwick's Translation, etc., pp. 42-43.





*R. Masswell*



*C. Puffinrich*



*J. G. Friend &  
J. B. Bannell*





proceeded together in accordance with an arrangement made between Vancouver and Galiano. In the neighbourhood of Desolation Sound, a great school of whales was seen, which led Vancouver to observe that—"this circumstance, in some measure, favoured the assertion in Mr. Meares's publication, that a passage to the ocean would be found by persevering in our present course; though this was again rendered very doubtful, as we had understood, from our Spanish friends, that, notwithstanding the Spaniards had lived upon terms of great intimacy with Mr. Gray and other American traders at Nootka, they had no knowledge of any person having ever performed such a voyage, but from the history of it published in England; and so far were these gentlemen from being better acquainted with the discoveries of De Fuce or De Fonte than ourselves, that, from us, they expected much information as to the truth of such reports." Vancouver then remarked that Valdez, who spoke the Indian language fluently, said that the natives had told him that the inlet "did communicate with the ocean to the northward, where they had seen ships." Valdez, however, it was observed, did not place much reliance in these reports. In view of the extraordinary story concocted by Meares with regard to Kendrick's reputed circumnavigation of Vancouver Island, the remarks of the Spanish navigator are exceedingly interesting.

The British and Spanish vessels continued in company for several days and their officers were jointly engaged in a minute examination of the continental shore. Each indentation was examined with care in small boats commanded by Vancouver, Broughton, Mudge, Puget, Baker, Whidby, and Johnstone, and the wealth of information acquired was faithfully embodied in the great chart of Vancouver, which must stand as a monument to that officer's zeal and ability. The late Captain Walbran well crystallized the unanimous judgment of scholars in stating that Vancouver carried on this survey "with a zeal beyond all praise." On the 13th of July, however, the two expeditions parted company off the entrance to Desolation Sound. Galiano and Valdez "begging leave to decline accompanying us further, as the powers they possessed in their miserable vessels were unequal to a co-operation with us, and being apprehensive their attendance would retard our progress."

Vancouver and Galiano at this point again compared notes and presented each other with copies of the charts they had made and



"after an exchange of good wishes, we bade each other farewell, having experienced much satisfaction, and mutually received every kindness and attention our peculiar situation could afford our little society."

Galiano and Valdez exhibited praiseworthy zeal in following out their instructions and, in spite of their inadequate equipment, they succeeded in accomplishing a great deal. In common with other Spanish explorers the reputations of these men have suffered from the fact that the splendidly equipped British expeditions overshadowed their really laudable efforts in the later days of Spanish activity in these waters. Spain never did justice to her navigators, whose labours were not given to the world until sometime after the reports of the British explorers were made public. The Spanish literature on the subject of the Northwest coast is meagre in the extreme, whereas English literature of travel and geography has been enriched by numerous monumental works on British enterprise in the North Pacific. It is a relief therefore to find that the notable achievements of the two Spanish commanders, Galiano and Valdez, have not been entirely overlooked by their Government.

The work of the expedition can best be portrayed by quoting from the original journal, which has been specially translated for the Archives Department of British Columbia. For instance under the dates June 15th to 18th, 1792, the following entries appear:

1792, June 15th.—"In the morning Vernachi went in the launch to seek a good anchorage to N. W., of the one we were in, thinking to find it within the Sounds of Porlier, from which we thought we were not very distant: our position was midway between the two points which lie to the S. E. of these sounds.

"The wind began to freshen from the N. E., and our position was growing serious if it should blow violently from that quarter. At half-past eight in the morning the launch, which had started at half-past four, was not yet in sight and its delay began to give us some anxiety; but we saw it soon after, and it arrived alongside without having found a desirable anchorage in the two leagues distance it had travelled.

"As the weather would not allow the Schooners to cross to the N. coast, it was resolved to proceed in them in search of the desired anchorage. We set sail at 9 in the morning hoping to find it in the





VIEW OF NATURAL GALLERY ON GALIANO ISLAND  
From an old Spanish drawing, made about 1792



Sound of Porlier; we reached the sound at mid-day, and entered easily, without stopping to send the launch to reconnoitre it, for although the wind which was blowing fresh from E. N. E., left us directly we got under shelter of the point at the entrance, the waters bore us inward, whither they were running swiftly.

“Having got inside we saw an Archipelago of numbers of small, low islands, and perceived that the Channel was divided into two main branches, one running S. E., and the other W.; it was at once resolved to take the former, so as to continue to have the assistance of the wind to get out if necessary. But when we had lost the shelter of the coast, the *Mexicana* experienced such a squall of wind, in the direction of the Channel, so strong that it put her in danger of capsizing. We saw at once how risky it was to entangle ourselves among these islands, the channels of which were unknown to us, and were of no interest to examine. The wind, being compressed to pass through the narrow space in the opening of the mountains, blew with great force: the currents were rapid and had to take various directions according as the multitude of islands demanded; and as no shore whatever was visible, it seemed probable that there were no convenient anchorages. As we could not go far inland, which would keep us a long time in this place, to the detriment of the important surveys in the direction of the mainland, it seemed prudent to get out without delay.

“But to get out of these Channels was not so easy as we expected. The current had acquired such force that we could not overcome it with the oars, and the wind was slack and gentle. So in order to get into the main Channel we had to spend two hours in constant labour and danger. The *Mexicana* managed it by passing to windward of the small island that lies at the entrance, and very near the end of its reef, in four fathoms, the stones being visible at the bottom; but the *Sutil*, which was getting more and more involved at the entrance, preferred to bear away so as to pass through the narrow Channel formed by the islet and the Coast, and did so successfully.

“There were in these Channels several deserted villages, and one with inhabitants on the W. side of the sound; from the latter five canoes came out with two old men and nineteen youths, all very robust and good looking; they came up to the Schooners, gave us





mulberries and shell fish, and took in exchange buttons and beads; and thinking that we wanted fresh water they went to their villages and brought us some vessels full of it.

"Free from the danger we had been in, we followed the Coast with the object of finding a good anchorage; we sailed straight to the Point of Gaviola, and not finding it there, we went on to the mouths of Wintuysen, aided by a fresh wind from the E., which cleared the sky. We reached the E. point of the said mouths and passed between them and the Islet: on doubling the said Point we saw two canoes which followed close to the shore observing the movements of the Schooners, and on coming athwart them they approached very cautiously. To gain their confidence and friendship we gave those who came in the canoes the best proofs of our intentions by throwing them some strings of beads into their canoes; but we could not get them to come near. We continued to proceed along the Coast with the same object, until at last we discovered an anchorage at a mile off the point, and as it seemed suitable we steered to it. We called this roadstead "Cala del Descanso," from our need of rest and our appreciation of the discovery on that occasion. We then reckoned five days since our entrance into the Strait and in them not only had we rectified but likewise added to the surveys of the previous years; which served as recompense for our fatigues and labours, no less than the hope of continuing the remaining tasks with equal result. For this object we tried to fit ourselves by replenishing the wood and water, and taking further measures which our position required with all possible despatch.

"When we had finished mooring the Schooners we landed on the shore at the end of the creek, and tried to penetrate into the wood in search of fresh water; but we had not gone far when we perceived some natives of the country who made signs to us not to go further, and others who were running apparently to inform their wives. We gratified them by withdrawing, and made them understand why we had come; then two of them took us to two very poor springs which were on the Coast, E. of the Port, about two cables beyond the anchorage of the Schooners, and in one of these springs there were three holes covered with semi-circular stones; this confirmed us in the idea we already had of the scarcity of fresh water on those Coasts. With this knowledge we returned to the beach and found six Indians



who were giving sardines to our sailors: we gave them in return beads and other tokens of friendship, but without being able to inspire them with entire confidence.

"On this day thirty-nine canoes with two or three Indians apiece came together round the Schooners. We did not find any remarkable difference between their physiognomy and that of the other natives who had visited us in the Strait; but on the other hand we could not help noticing the fact that many of them squinted, and they wore their whiskers covered with short hair, the beards with pear-shaped ornaments, and their eyebrows rather thick. Their clothes were reduced in general to blankets of coarse and well woven wool, fastened by two pins on the shoulder, but only long enough to reach to the knees. An occasional one wore a deerskin, particular attention being called to that which covered the man who appeared to be the Tais, who wore besides a second woollen blanket on top, a hat in the form of a truncated cone, five brass bracelets on the right wrist, and a hoop of copper round his neck, very similar to the one we had seen on an Indian in lat. 60° the year before. Some wore hats and many were painted with red ochre; they came smiling, appeared gentle, and if not stupid at least dull of understanding. The idiom is entirely different from that of Nootka, and they make even greater guttural noises and aspirates, so that it appeared to us more difficult to learn.

"They offered us in exchange great quantities of sardines, sundried and smoked, and arms, namely: arrows, some having well shaped points of flint or mussel shell, others of bone and serrated; clubs of whalebone, and medium-sized bows of fairly strong and flexible wood. They also offered new blankets which we afterwards concluded were of dog's hair, partly because when the woven hair was compared with that of those animals there was no apparent difference, and partly from the great number of dogs they keep in those villages, most of them being shorn. These animals are of moderate size, resembling those of English breed, with very thick coats, and usually white: among other things they differ from those of Europe in their manner of barking, which is simply a miserable howl.

"It was very easy for us to see that in spite of the pleasure we endeavoured to show, and the continual proofs of friendship which



we gave these Indians, we could not obtain their confidence. They were always hesitating and suspicious; the slightest movement upset them, and this frequently interrupted our communication.

"They prized beads and Monterey shells, the pearl of which they use for ornaments, and they value pieces of rough iron more than that manufactured into knives or razors, perhaps because they use them for points for arrows, harpoons and other things.

"Very noteworthy is the difference in character which we perceived in the natives in such a short distance as that which lies between the mouths of Porlier and those of Wintuysen. The former are trusting and affable; the latter suspicious and disagreeable. But is not the same difference sometimes seen between neighbouring settlements, and more civilized nations? And if in towns living under the same laws the circumstances of education are sufficient for this to happen, why is it strange that the same thing should occur among these Tribes, who are apparently independent, and have no constant intercourse, as we have observed by noting that the canoes do not go beyond a certain distance away from the villages? Navigators must keep these reflections in mind and never trust the savages of the Coasts, even if they have found those of other neighbouring villages humane and amiable.

"We gave ourselves up to rest for the night, dividing our crew into four watches, and setting sentinels accordingly, so that by their vigilance the others might rest quietly. The night was peaceful and there was no disturbance in the anchorage throughout it.

June 16th.—"We spent part of the following day in arranging and making fair copies of our rough notes of observations, points of reference and calculations, and information of all kinds, which, as jottings made in the midst of the duties and active work of the ships, required to be expanded in good form and order before other new ideas confused those already acquired. We likewise continued to replenish the water, of which we found that at that season thirty barrels daily could be got in the place we were in.

"The Savages did not overcome their distrust however much we endeavoured to make them understand our peaceable views: no entreaties or attentions sufficed to induce the Chief to come on board the *Sutil*, and all the Canoes kept close together and were alongside the Schooner in great trepidation. Nevertheless they went on



making exchanges without difficulty and supplying us with fish until the afternoon, when upon the boat putting off from the *Sutil* to go to land, all those who were near became alarmed and went off without daring to approach the Schooner during the rest of the day. Later on two Canoes appeared in the anchorage, and arrested our attention by the evil appearance of the four Indians who came in them, for they were all squint-eyed and of very disagreeable countenances. They showed us their weapons, and gave us to understand that they did not lack courage: we responded with signs of friendship and kindness, and they withdrew, more arrogant about their own bravery than satisfied as to our intentions.

"On no other part of the coast had we seen such an ingenious method of fishing as among these Indians. They took in each Canoe a very well made harpoon of mussel shell, mounted on a fairly long rod with a hook at the other end. They also took a piece of wood in the shape of a cone with some thin and flexible strips of bark fastened in the periphery of its base like feathers, the whole being very like a shuttlecock. They fixed this in the hook by its base that held the feathers, and on seeing a fish at a great distance below the water they put it in very gently, point downwards, and close to the head of the fish. They then pulled away the hook and the shuttlecock went up to the surface with a rapidity which did not allow the fish to see what it was. Deceived in this manner it followed the object up to the surface of the water, and then the Indian, who had already turned the rod and presented the harpoon, threw it at the fish, usually with such accuracy that he seldom failed to hit it.

June 17th.—"On the 15th and 16th the rain had been almost continual, but the 17th was a delicious Spring day. Under a clear sky a pleasant country then presented itself to our view: the varied and brilliant green of some of the trees and meadows, and the grand roar of the waters dashing upon the rocks in various creeks, charmed our senses and afforded us a condition the more agreeable as we were the nearer to the past dangers and fatigues. Desiring to utilize it for the benefit of the crews and the advancement of our surveys, Salamanca went out with five men armed and supplied with beads and other trifling things, to go towards the site of the villages of the Indians to see if they had dismantled them, as might be inferred from the passing of the armed canoes.





"Salamanca found the country he went to visit was covered with brushwood and very straight pine trees; he saw the remains of the village which the Indians had abandoned; and he returned to the ship.

"On the 18th we repaired the boat and continued the work of taking in water, and in the afternoon we went in the launch to visit the interior of the mouths of Wintuysen, and examine the ends of the creeks we had seen the day previous. The second mouth, reckoning from our anchorage, is more sheltered than that of El Descanso, but not so clear and good for anchorage. We afterwards went along a Channel which turns to the E. S. E., and from its direction should fall into the Archipelago we saw on the previous point to eastward of the Port."

It should be mentioned that the "Wintuysen" of the foregoing extract was the name bestowed in 1791 by the Spanish navigator, Eliza, upon the inlet, the arms of which are known today as Northumberland Channel, Nanaimo Harbour and Departure Bay. The "Cala del Descanso" (Small Bay of Rest) of Galiano and Valdez is the little haven of Gabriola Island, opposite Nanaimo, to which the original name, Descanso, was restored in 1904 by Captain John H. Parry, of H. M. surveying vessel, *Egeria*, as related by Captain John T. Walbran in his well-known and exhaustive work on the Coast Names of British Columbia.

In due course the British explorer reached the broad channel that separates the north eastern end of Vancouver Island from the mainland. After emerging from the long, narrow passage, named after Lieutenant James Johnstone, Vancouver, as heretofore, adopted the plan of despatching boats in all directions to examine the indentations of the continental coast. The cluster of large islands to the north westward of the entrance to Knight's Canal was named Broughton's Archipelago, in recognition of the services of the Commander of the *Chatham*. The ships then anchored under Point Gordon, at the entrance of Fife's passage, while the small boats were employed in charting the various fiords, islands and rocks.

It should be explained that Johnstone and Swaine had been despatched on July the 4th to examine the narrow passage leading to Queen Charlotte Sound. The flying expedition passed through Johnstone's Strait and made at midnight, in a torrent of rain, a small



island under the lee of which they were partly sheltered from the inclemency of the weather. Here the party were storm-bound until the morning of the 10th, the dawn of which brought a change of weather, which enabled them to reach "an island conspicuously situated, from whence their expectations were gratified by a clear though distant view of the expansive ocean." This observation determined once for all the insular character of the Nootka region. As the boat had only been provisioned for seven days, Johnstone was compelled to lose no time in returning to the ships, which were reached safely early on the morning of the 12th.

It was not until Johnstone and Swaine returned with the news of a channel to the northward, communicating with the ocean, that Galiano suggested that the British ships should proceed without the *Sutil* and *Mexicana*. Thus, several days before the vessels of either expedition reached the ocean to the northward, it had been clearly established by the English officers that the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Queen Charlotte's Sound were connected by a series of gulfs, sounds and straits.

On August 5th, Vancouver reached the ocean and steering a northward course passed Cape Caution and entered Fitzhugh Sound, where at four in the afternoon the *Discovery* suddenly grounded on a shoal of sunken rocks. Fortunately the sea was calm; had it been otherwise "nothing short of immediate and inevitable destruction would have resulted from the untoward accident." The boat remained in this "melancholy situation" until two in the morning of the 7th, when with the rising tide, Vancouver had the "indescribable satisfaction of feeling her again afloat without having received the least apparent injury." On the evening of the seventh, the *Chatham* met with a like misfortune, and for a time she was in a precarious position. A thick fog coming in from the ocean hid the *Chatham* from the *Discovery*, causing much anxiety to Vancouver; however about nine on the following morning, the fog lifted and showed the *Chatham* approaching under sail, apparently uninjured. The *Discovery* weighed anchor and joined the tender and the two vessels sailed southward in company. It was then that Vancouver confirmed the name of Queen Charlotte's Sound given to the opening by Wedgborough of the *Experiment* in August, 1786. The American captains Gray and Kendrick had called it Pintard's Sound. The Sound where



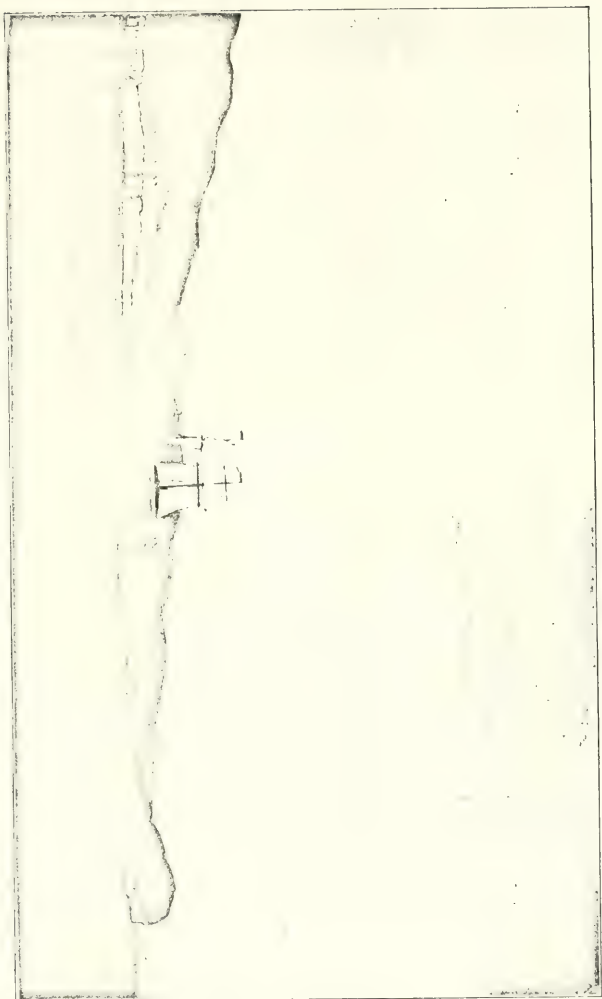
the vessels had grounded was recognized as that named Fitzhugh's Sound by Captain James Hanna, of the *Sea Otter*, on his second voyage.

Vancouver made Friendly Cove on the afternoon of Tuesday, August 28th, having been piloted to the anchorage by a Spanish officer. Riding at anchor in the cove was the Spanish brig *Activa*, flying the broad pennant of Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, Commandant of Port San Lorenzo de Nutka, as the inlet was called by the Spaniards. Beside the *Activa* lay the store ship *Daedalus* and a small merchantman, the *Three Brothers*, of London, commanded by one Alder, late of the Royal Navy. As the Commandant resided on shore, Lieutenant Puget was despatched to acquaint him of the arrival of the British expedition and to state that the Spanish flag would be saluted by the British vessels if the Spaniards would return the compliment with an equal number of guns. On receiving a polite message in reply, Vancouver saluted the Spanish flag while the guns from the fort echoed the martial salutation. Vancouver, accompanied by some of his officers then called upon Bodega y Quadra, who received the party with the greatest cordiality.

The meeting was historic inasmuch as never before had ships of the royal navies of Great Britain and Spain exchanged courtesies on the Northwest coast. Moreover, the two commanders, Vancouver and Bodega y Quadra, had been authorized by their respective Governments to give effect to the terms of the Nootka Convention, of which treaty it may be truly said that it marked a turning point in the history of Northwestern America. That agreement had brought the two greatest colonizing powers of the world face to face in the Pacific, and, as the loyal Iriarte sorrowfully observed, this meant much to Spain.

Of the two men who conducted the historic negotiations at Nootka in September, 1792, the Spaniard lost nothing in comparison. The memory of the British officer, George Vancouver, is revered by his countrymen, and nearly all that can be known of his character and career is known. He was a brave and painstaking commander—neither so brilliant nor so successful as the immortal Cook who had trained him—yet an accomplished navigator, an excellent disciplinarian, kindhearted, courageous and resourceful; a man to whom





THE COUNTRY OF NEW ALBION

In the latitude of 45 N. when Cape Lookout and the 3 Brothers bore S. S. E. dist. 8 leagues





duty always came first; just such a man, in fact, as the British Navy has ever given to the service of the Empire. Of the Spaniard, all too little is known, but that which is known redounds to his credit. Brave, courteous, honourable, noble in appearance and charming in manner, Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra was the personification of Spanish grace and sagacity. If the management of Spanish affairs in the Pacific had always been in such able hands there might have been no Nootka Affair and today no Canadian seaboard in the west. In the long story of Spanish dalliance and futile effort in the North Pacific, the name of Bodega y Quadra is conspicuously associated with the only real attempt ever made by Spain to vindicate her policy and to establish her sovereignty in that quarter. As Commandant of San Blas and as Governor of Nootka he had exerted all his influence in behalf of the northern enterprise and had sought to fortify his country's position; but he came too late.

Bodega y Quadra was at this time about forty-eight years of age. Of his lineage it is known that he came of a noble house. He was the son of Don Thomas de la Bodega, and his wife, Francisca Mollinado, a native of Lima (where her son was born about the year 1744), but of pure Galician descent. It appears that "Quadra" had been added to his father's name at the request of a relative, Don Antonio de la Quadra, who resided in Peru at the time that Thomas de la Bodega emigrated to that country.<sup>12</sup> The noble-hearted Spaniard died in March, 1794, either at San Blas, or at his country house at Tepic, a small town about sixty miles from the coast.

Such were the two men who met at Nootka in the summer of 1792, the one to hand over and the other to receive the property claimed by the British Government. The story of that meeting has almost been forgotten, but in the annals of the Northwest coast it holds an important place—for its human interest as well, because it marked the end of Spanish sovereignty and heralded the dawn of a new era.

The day following the arrival of the *Discovery* and *Chatham* was observed by an interchange of hospitality. In the morning Bodega y Quadra with several of his officers breakfasted with Vancouver. They were received with due formality and saluted on

<sup>12</sup> Meany, Vancouver and Puget Sound.



their arrival and departure—"the day was afterwards spent in ceremonious offers of courtesy, with much harmony and festivity." The same evening Vancouver, with as many of his officers as could be spared, were entertained at dinner by the Spanish Commandant, and were "gratified with a repast we had lately been little accustomed to, or had the most distant idea of meeting with at this place. A dinner of five courses, consisting of a superfluity of the best provisions, was served with great elegance; a royal salute was fired on drinking health to the sovereigns of England and Spain, and a salute of seventeen guns to the success of the service in which the *Discovery* and *Chatham* were engaged."<sup>13</sup> The notorious chief Maquinna sat at the table.

It is amply testified not only by Vancouver, but as well by the American traders who had visited the port of Nootka during the Spanish regime, that Bodega y Quadra was ever profuse in his hospitality. One of the furtraders records that the dinner service was of solid silver and that the viands were always of the best. The *pour parlars* were auspicious and all seemed well-pleased, although the occasion must have been a sad one for Bodega y Quadra, who, no doubt, could not help observing the elation of the British officers.

There was one person, however, who looked with sullen eye upon the festivities that marked the meeting. Maquinna, the Nootkan Chief, did not disguise his regret that his friends the Spaniards were about to leave the place. His first meeting with the British was unfortunate and did not tend to promote a regard for the new masters of the port. Maquinna had visited the *Discovery* early on the morning after the arrival of Vancouver, but the sentinels and officers of the watch, not knowing his rank, had turned him away. He bitterly resented this indignity and angrily complained to Bodega y Quadra of the affront that had been offered him. The Spaniard "very obligingly found means to soothe him," and after presents of blue cloth, copper and other articles, he appeared to be satisfied. Vancouver relates, however, that "no sooner had he drank a few glasses of wine, than he renewed the subject, regretted the Spaniards were about to quit the place, and asserted that we should presently give it up to some other nation; by which means himself and his people would be constantly disturbed and harassed by new masters. Señor

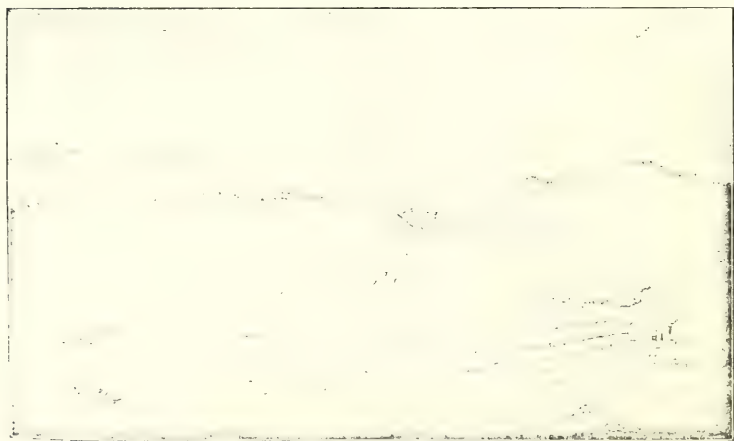
<sup>13</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 1, p. 385.







FRIENDLY COVE, NOOTKA SOUND



SALMON COVE, OBSERVATORY INLET

Quadra took much pains to explain that it was our ignorance of his person which had occasioned the mistake, and that himself and subjects would be as kindly treated by the English, as they had been by the Spaniards. He seemed at length convinced by Señor Quadra's arguments, and became reconciled by his assurance that his fears were groundless." Vancouver added that "I could not help observing with a mixture of surprise and pleasure, how much the Spaniards had succeeded in gaining the good opinion and confidence of these people; together with the very orderly behaviour, so conspicuously evident in their conduct towards the Spaniards on all occasions."<sup>14</sup>

After this ceremonious interchange of courtesies, the business of the hour, that of settling what lands were to be surrendered, engaged the attention of the British and Spanish Commanders. Before Vancouver's arrival, Bodega y Quadra had sedulously collected evidence bearing upon the dispute between Martinez and Colnett, Hudson, Duncan, and Funter, the men commanding the ships of the company of which Meares was the moving spirit. He had obtained a joint letter from Gray and Ingraham, of the *Columbia* and *Washington*, dealing at some length with the events of 1789.<sup>15</sup>

The statement of the American captains is all in favour of the Spanish contention, and much has been made of it by American historians in after years. In view of this fact, Robert Duffin's letter to Vancouver, written on September 26, 1792, at Nootka, is of peculiar interest. It reads as follows:

To Cap<sup>n</sup> George Vancouver, Commander of His Majesty's Ships *Discovery*, and *Chatham*, now Laying in Friendly Cove; Nootka or King George's Sound.

Sir:—

Whereas different reports have been propagated, relative to what right Mr. Meares had for taking Possession of the Land in Friendly Cove Nootka Sound: I shall here state with that Candor, and Veracity, which has always influenced me on such Occasions; an impartial account of Mr. Meares's proceedings in the above Port.

Toward the Close of the Year 1787, a commercial Expedition was undertaken by John Henry Cox, Esqr. & Co.—Merchants then

<sup>14</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 1, pp. 385-86.

<sup>15</sup> This letter is given in Greenhow's Oregon and California (London, 1844), pp. 414-17.





residing at Canton, who accordingly Fitted and equipped; two ships, for the Fur Trade, on the N. West Coast of America.—

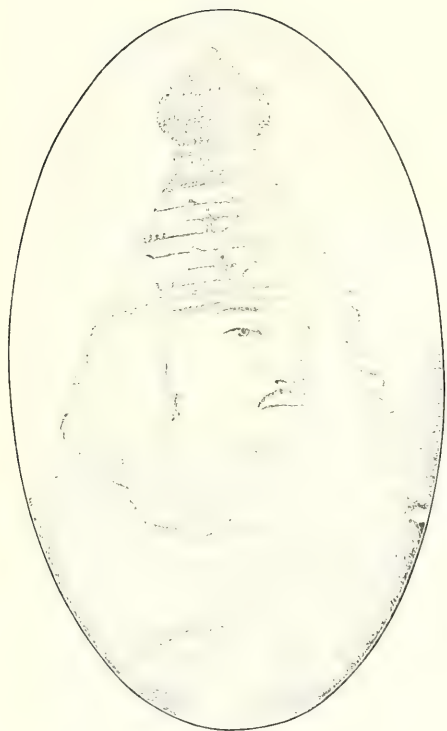
The conduct of this Expedition was reposed in John Meares Esqr. as commander in Chief, and sole conductor of the Voyage, and who was likewise one of the Merchant Proprietors; these Vessells were Equipped, under Portuguese Colours; with a view, to mitigate those Heavey port charges imposed on Ships of every Nation (Portuguese only excepted) which circumstance, is well known to every commercial Gentleman trading to that part of the World.

Under these circumstances, the said Vessells were fitted in the Name and under the Firm, of John Cavallo Esqr. a Portuguese Merchant, then residing at Macao; but he had no property in them whatsoever, both their Cargoes being intirely British property, and solely navigated by the subjects of His Britanic Majesty.

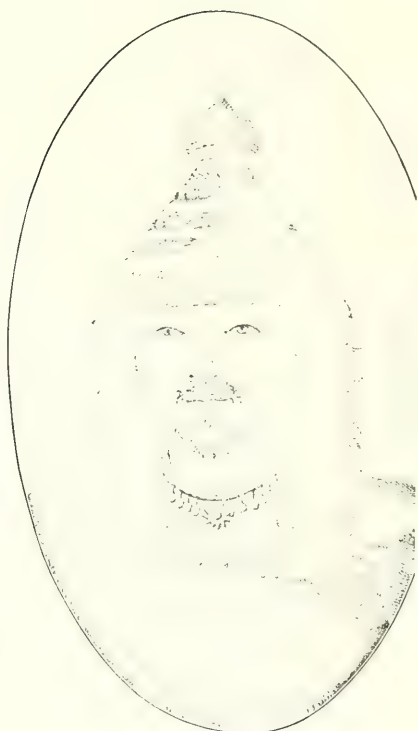
We arrived at the said port, in Nootka Sound, in May 1788, on our first arrival, in the above port the two chiefs Maquilla, and Calicum were absent. On their return which was either on the 17th or 18th of the same month, Mr. Meares, accompanied by myself, and Mr. Robt. Funter, our 2nd officer, went ashore and treated with the said Chiefs; for the whole of the land that forms Friendly Cove, in Nootka Sound, in his Britanic Majesty's Name, and accordingly bought it of them, for 8, or 10, Sheets of Copper, and several other trifling Articles.—The Natives were fully satisfied with their agreement. The Chiefs, likewise their subjects, did homage to Mr. Meares as their Sovereign, using those formalities, that are peculiar to themselves, and which Mr. Meares has made mention of in his publication.

The British Flag was displayed; on shore, at the same time; those formalities were used as is customary on such occasions (and not the Portuguese Flag, as has been insinuated by several people who were not present at the time; consequently advanced those assertions without a Just Foundation) on our taking Possession of the Cove, in his Majesty's Name, as aforementioned, Mr. Meares caused a house to be erected on the very spot, where the *Chatham's* tent now stands; it being the most convenient part of the Cove for our intentions. The Chiefs, with their subjects, offered to quit the Cove entirely and reside at a place called *Tashers*; and leave the Place to





MACUINA  
Xefe de Nutka



TÉTACÚ  
Xefe de la entrada del Estrecho de Juan de Fuca



ourselves as sole masters, and owners, of the whole Cove, and Lands adjacent.

Consequently we were not confined merely to that Spot; but had equall Liberty to Erect a house in any other part of the Cove but chose the Spot we did for the above mentioned reason.

Mr. Meares therefore appointed, Mr. Robt. Funter, to reside in the house, which consisted of three Bed Chambers and a Mess-room for the Officers, and proper apartments for the Men,—the above apartments were elevated about 5 feet from the ground, under these were other apartments for putting our stores in—exclusive of House were several sheds, and out houses, built for the conveniency of the artificers to Work in.

On Mr. Meares' departure; the said House, &c., was left in good condition, and he enjoined Maquilla to take care of it until he (Mr. Meares) or some of his associates should return, on the Coast again.

It has been reported by several people that on Don José Estn. Martinez's Arrival in the Cove, there was not a Vestige of the said House remaining. However that might be I cannot tell, as I was not at Nootka when he arrived. On our return in July, 1789, in the said Cove, we found it Occupied by the Subjects of His Catholick Majesty; and likewise some People belonging to the Ship *Columbia*, commanded by Mr. John Kendrick, under the Flag and Protection of the United States of America had their Tents, and out houses erected on the same Spot where our House formerly stood, but I saw no remains of our Architecture.

We found laying at Anchor in the said Cove His Catholick Majesty of Spain's Ships—*Princessa* and *San Carlos* and likewise the Ship *Columbia* and Sloop *Washington*.

The second Day after our arrival, we were captured by Don José Estn. Martinez, and the Americans were suffered to Carry on their Commerce with the Natives unmolested.

This Sir, is the Best information I can give you that might tend to elucidate the propriety of Mr. Meares's taking Possession of the Village of Nootka and Friendly Cove.

Should anyone whatsoever doubt the truth of this Protest, I am



always ready to attest it before any Court of Judicature, or any one Person duly Authorized to Examine Me.

I have the Honor to be with the Greatest Esteem, Sir,  
Your most Obedient and very Hum<sup>le</sup> Servant,  
ROBT. DUFFIN.

The said Robert Duffin sworn to  
the truth of the beforemen-  
tioned relation, before me,  
in Friendly Cove, Nootka  
Sound, the 26th day of Sept-  
ember, 1792.

GEO. VANCOUVER.

The Spaniard opened the negotiations with a letter respecting the restitution to be made, transmitting therewith all the correspondence in his possession dealing with the question and the evidence he had gathered during his residence at Nootka. From the first it seemed that a deadlock must ensue for Bodega y Quadra averred that there was nothing to be handed over but part of the beach of Friendly Cove and a small extent of land behind it, while Vancouver insisted that the whole port should be surrendered. Neither officer seemed inclined to yield.

The Spaniard advanced the arguments used in the diplomatic controversy between Great Britain and Spain in 1790, while Vancouver insisted that the commissioners were in no way concerned with the facts that had induced their respective Governments to come to an understanding, but solely with the execution of the definitive provisions of the treaty. Differ as they might, however, with respect to their interpretations of the provisions of the Nootka Convention the personal relations of Vancouver and Bodega y Quadra were marked with the greatest cordiality. Vancouver's journal contains many complimentary and friendly references to the Spanish officer. There is no reason to believe that this regard was not mutual, although Bodega y Quadra's private opinion of Vancouver has never been published. The annals of this coast hardly afford a more pleasing picture than that of the negotiations at Nootka in 1792 between the representatives of the British and Spanish Governments.









It should not be forgotten that these negotiations were of a delicate nature. A little lack of consideration for the feelings of others, a small show of bitterness or resentment on the part of either commissioner, might have caused national prejudices to blaze forth with disastrous consequences, but dignity, courtesy, and magnanimity marked the occasion. Whatever may have been his feelings, Bodega y Quadra did not display any bitterness; and Vancouver, disappointed as he was at his failure to bring the matter to a successful issue, was careful not to give voice to his thoughts. It was fortunate that such strong men had been charged with the conduct of the affair.

The official correspondence of the two officers was severely formal. It cannot be better illustrated than by their notes exchanged on September the 13th, 1792, and Vancouver's minute of the 15th which follow in order. Vancouver writes thus to Bodega y Quadra on the 13th, in riposte to the Spaniards home-thrust of the previous day, in the courteous diplomatic duel going on between them:

On board his Britannic Majesty's Ship *Discovery*,

Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound, 13th September, 1792.

Sir:—

I am excessively concernd that after the explanatory conversation which took place yesterday to find on the translation of your letter of that date any further necessity of corresponding on the subject of these Territories! What I understand to be the Territories of wch his Britannic Majesties subjects were dispossessed of & to be restord to them by the 1st Article of the Convention & Count Florida Blanca's Letter, is this Place, intoto, & Port Cox, of wch if it's not your power to put me in full possession I can have no Idea of hoisting the British flag on the spot you have pointed out in this Cove of but little more than an hundred yards in extent any way. If therefore that is your situation, I must decline recieving any such restitution on the part of his Britannic Majesty & so soon as his Britannic Majesty's Vessels under my command are in readiness I shall proceed to sea untill I shall recieve further directions from the British Court on this subject, nor can I avoid in this instance observing the material difference of the language of your two last letters from that of your first, in wch if the Translation is right, you say: "but comprehending the Spirit of the King my Master is to establish a solid Peace &



permanent with all nations & consulting to remove Obstacles wch influence discord far from thinking to continue in *this Port* I am ready without prejudice to our legitimate rights nor that of the *Courts better instructed resolves, generously to Cede to England the Houses Gardens & Offices wch have with so much labour been cultivated.*" On these subjects I have already acknowledged my thanks for the genrous disposition of the Spanish Court in leaving those Offices & for our Convenience; these however I consider as erected on the Territories of which the British Subjects were dispossessed in April 1789.

I have the Honour to be with Sentiments of the sincerest regard & Esteem

GEO. VANCOUVER.

In response Bodega y Quadra is no less ready in pressing his point of the attack with the object of at any rate disarming his opponent, as his reply of the same date exemplifies:

Nootka 13 September 1792.

Sor Dn. George Vancouver, Commander &c., &c.

Sir:—

I thought after the verbal conversation wch we had the difficulties you had put to me were settled, & that we had both complied with our duty, but seeing by your attentive letter of the 13 currt that you do not conform I repeat, I will leave you in Posesion not only of the territories wch were taken from his Brittanick subjects in April 1789 but also that wch was then occupied by the Natives of the Place, & now by the Spaniards in consequence of the Cession made in their favor by Maquinna. But you have not the power to controvert, nor I to adjudge the property of this Land; thus I hope it will be convenient to you to have the possession of the whole, & well inform our Sovereigns, & they will decide the most Just.

This medium I think the most conformable to the Pacific Spirit of the Courts as in the Seventh Article of the Convention, its orderd that *'in all cases of Quarrels or the infraction of the Articles of the present Convention, The Officers of the one & the other Party without passing to any violence or act of Force, are to give an exact*



*relation of the case & of its circumstances to their respective Courts who will terminate Amicably such differences. All ours consists in the rights of Possession & property.*

You say you are authorizd to recieve the whole, I am not for to deliver in those terms. In this Idea I judge we shall be under the necessity to instruct our Kings of the truth of things of wch they have no knowledge, & that for my part there may not be the least motive for Disgust, nor for you to suffer any extortion. I am ready to deliver all that was occupied by the English in that Epoch as a thing belonging to Great Britain & to leave you in possession of the remaining Land. Reserving only the right of Property, wch I have not the power to alienate, & according to my method of thinking, ought to be preservd Jointly with the Brittanick Subjects & to comply in this manner with the sense of the treaty.

For what respects the Houses, Gardens & Offices, I in nothing vary from my first expressions wch were always limited with these words—without prejudice to our legitimate right, or what the Courts better instructed may resolve. This is without renouncing the property wch I comprehend ought to remain in favor of the King my Master, I shall be happy to have in answer the pleasure to find you are fully satisfied & that you will Live persuaded of the sincerity with which I esteem you

Sir

Your affectionate Servant

(Signed) Juan Franco de la Bodega y Quadra.

In reply to the foregoing, Vancouver's succeeding despatch is unconditional and demands an unconditional surrender or a cessation of the negotiations, in the following terms:

On board his Britannic Majesty's Ship *Discovery*, Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound, 15 September 1792.

Sir:—

I have recd your letter of the 13 and in reply have only to say that like the former ones it contains nothing but a discussion of right, which as I have before observd is diametrically foreign to the business we are orderd to execute, that subject having already been thoroughly investigated by the Ministers appointed by the respective Courts for that purpose as is fully explaind in the preamble





to the late Treaty. You likewise mention Mr. Meares's Vessels being under Portuguese Colours, that is equally foreign, Mr. Fitzherbert & the Count of Florida Blanca being as well informd of that subject as we are by Mr. Meares's original petition to the Parliament of Great Britain I am therefore only here as I have before repeatedly mentiond, to recieve & be put into full possession of, on the part of his Britannic Majesty the territories the British Subjects were dispossessed of in April 1789 wch are this Place & Port Cox.—this is the Place which was then occupied by the said subjects, here they were captured; their Vessels sent as prizes, & themselves Prisoners, to New Spain; by wch means this place was forcibly wrested from them, & occupied & fortified by the Officers of the Spanish Crown.

This place therefore agreable to the first Article of the Convention & the Count of Florida Blanca's first letter (of wch the British Court has transmitted me a true translation) with that of Clioquot or Port Cox are to be restord without any reservation whatever on which terms & on those terms only I am here to recieve the said territories, & must here insist on declining any further correspondence on this Subject except recieving your positive Answer wether you will or will not restore to me on the part of his Britannic Majesty the said territories & in respect to the 7th Article of the Convention, in the present instance, there can be no appeal whatever, you being orderd to restore the said territories & I orderd to recieve them, your will therefore favor me with your final answer on that subject, permitting me to remain &c. &c.

GEO. VANCOUVER.

Sor. Dn. Juan Franco. de la Bodega y Quadra.

On September 17th, however the negotiations came to an abrupt termination. After many diplomatic notes had passed between the two officers, Bodega y Quadra signified that he could not depart from the terms of his offer "*leaving me in possession only, not formally restoring* the territory of Nootka to Great Britain." Two days later Vancouver, finding Bodega y Quadra still firm in his determination, "considered any further correspondence totally unnecessary; and instead of writing, I requested in conversation the next day to be informed if he was positively resolved to adhere, in the restitution of this country to the principles contained in his last



letter and on receiving an answer from him in the affirmative, I acquainted him that I should consider Nootka as a *Spanish port* and requested *his permission* to carry on our necessary employment on shore, which he very politely gave, with the most friendly assurance of every service and kind offices in his power to grant."<sup>16</sup>

The negotiations having thus been brought to a conclusion, both Vancouver and Bodega y Quadra prepared to sail south for the winter. Jacinto Caamano was appointed to take charge of the port until the arrival of Fidalgo in the *Princessa*. The *Activa* then made ready to sail and Vancouver likewise prepared his vessels for their southern cruise. Before the officers parted, however, Vancouver in a formal letter advised Bodega y Quadra that as he could not receive the territory in dispute on the conditions proposed, he would immediately report the result of the negotiations to the Court of London and wait for further instructions for the regulation of his future conduct. The next day Bodega y Quadra acknowledged the receipt of the communication and the charts of the coast which Vancouver had transmitted a few days before. These notes concluded the correspondence of that year (1792).

On Friday, September 21st, Vancouver gave a farewell dinner to the Spanish commander and "the day passed with the utmost cheerfulness and hilarity." The next day the *Activa* sailed from Friendly Cove.

Nootka Sound in that day was the recognized rendez vous of the traders resorting to the Northwest coast. Here they beached and repaired their vessels and here they refitted and replenished their water casks and conducted all the operations that must of necessity be performed after long and stormy voyages. Nootka Sound in the years when the furtrade flourished frequently presented an animated scene. While Vancouver was there, in the summer of 1792, an English and an American shallop were on the stocks in the cove, which when finished were to be employed in collecting skins in the inland waters of the coast. At anchor in the stream lay the American brig *Hope*, in command of Ingraham; a French ship; the *Venus*, of Bengal, commanded by one Shepherd; the Spanish ships of war *Gertrudis* and *Concepcion*, of thirty-six guns each; the brig *Activa* of twelve guns; the *Princessa*, *Aranzuzu* and *San Carlos*, transport

<sup>16</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 1, p. 403.



and storeships; the little vessels, *Sutil* and *Mexicana*, commanded by Galiano and Valdez, and His Majesty's ships *Discovery*, *Chatham* and *Daedalus*. On the shores of Friendly Cove were the officers' quarters, barracks, a hospital, storehouses, and other buildings.

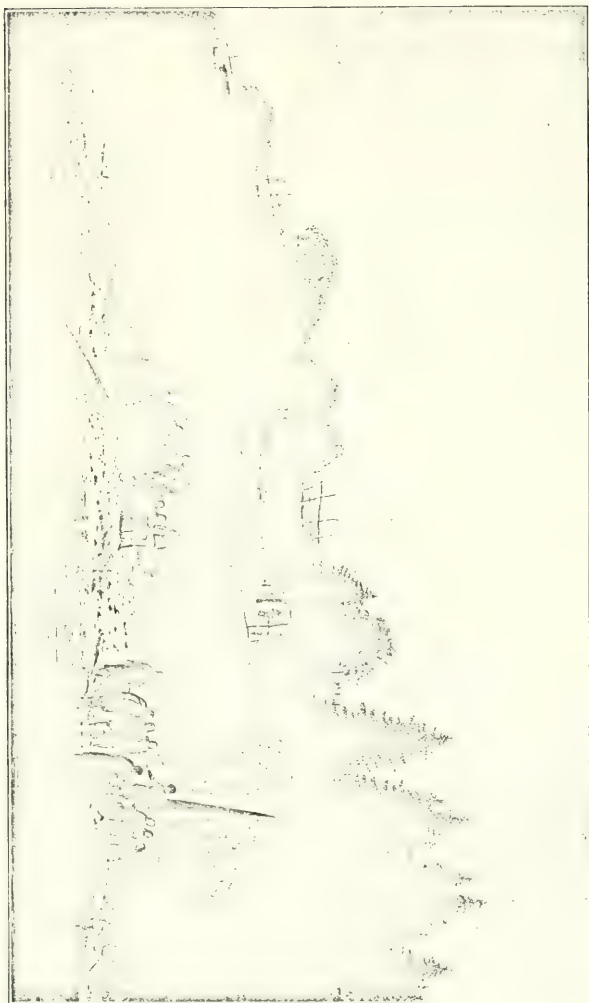
Vancouver was greatly impressed with the establishment. He remarked that the buildings "appeared sufficiently secure, and more extensive than our occasions required. A large new oven had been lately built expressly for our services, and had not hitherto been permitted to be used. The houses had been all repaired, and the gardeners were busily employed in putting the gardens in order. The poultry, consisting of fowls and turkeys, was in excellent condition, and in abundance, as were the black cattle and swine."<sup>17</sup> From these and other remarks of the British officer it is to be gathered that after the re-occupation of the place in 1790 the Spaniards had bestowed no little care upon the establishment. In fact, it is evident that the Spanish government had intended to occupy it permanently and would have done so had it not been for the Nootka Convention. Such was Nootka in the year 1792.

Vancouver, with the three British vessels, left Nootka on October 13, 1792. At the outset owing to a sudden calm the *Chatham* was swept by the tide against a rocky point of the cove and it was only by strenuous exertions and assistance from the *Daedalus* that the vessel was got off without any apparent injury, though she had struck very heavily. On the *Discovery* Vancouver had two strange passengers. They were two young women of the Sandwich Islands who had sailed from their native land in the *Jenny* of Bristol. That vessel had only arrived at Nootka, on her way to England, a few days before Vancouver's departure and at the captain's earnest request he consented to give them a return passage to their homes. Passing by Cape Classet he records that "finding that this name had originated only from that of an inferior chief's residing in this neighbourhood," he had restored Captain Cook's appellation of Cape Flattery. The *Daedalus* was detached to examine Gray's Harbour, while the *Chatham* and *Discovery* explored the Columbia. The former led the way, but as the water shoaled and was breaking in every direction the *Discovery* "hauled to the westward to avoid the threatened danger." Just as he turned away Vancouver saw, in the fading light,

<sup>17</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 1, p. 393.



A VIEW OF THE HABITATIONS IN NOOTKA SOUND







signals from the *Chatham*, which however he could not clearly understand. Finding ten fathoms water he anchored for the night. At day break on the 20th he was delighted to see the *Chatham* ten miles nearer the shore, but was grieved to learn from Mr. Johnstone, her lieutenant, that the surf had been so heavy during the night as to destroy one of her small boats by dashing it upon the deck. He then recorded his opinion that the port was "inaccessible to vessels of our burthen . . . with this exception, that in very fine weather, with moderate winds and a smooth sea, vessels not exceeding four hundred tons, might, so far as we were enabled to judge, gain admittance."

On that day however he made another attempt; but while the *Chatham* made headway the *Discovery* was driven out by the strength of the current, the wind having died away. The morning of the 21st a heavy gale was blowing and Vancouver concluded to abandon the attempt, leaving Lieutenant Broughton to examine the Columbia in the smaller vessel. Ill fortune pursued her, however, and that very day the *Chatham* grounded upon an extensive shoal in mid-channel, but, later, being floated she was anchored in safety. Vancouver complains that Captain Gray's chart, which Lieutenant Broughton had with him, did not much resemble what it purported to represent, and that this shoal had completely escaped that navigator's attention. Even the spot at which Captain Gray showed an anchorage was found to be very shallow. The difference in the season of the year no doubt accounts for these and other discrepancies. Having resolved to make his examination in the cutter and the launch, Lieutenant Broughton set out on October 24th, with a week's provisions. Proceeding carefully up the river, noting exactly the conditions prevailing, surveying the course of the stream, and naming the principal points, bays, and islands, he reached on the 30th, Point Vancouver, which he considered to be 84 miles up the river and 100 miles from the *Chatham*, which lay in the estuary. After formally taking possession of the country in His Britannic Majesty's name (on which occasion, it is gravely recorded that the Indian chief who accompanied him, drank His Majesty's health), Broughton set out on the return to his vessel. Getting out of the river, the *Chatham* made her way to San Francisco where the *Discovery* lay. The two vessels in company proceeded to Monterey where the *Daedalus* had already arrived. After about two months occupied in preparing the charts,



drawings, letters, and other documents for transmission to England in charge of Lieutenant Broughton, during which period Señor Quadra showered upon Captain Vancouver every kindness and thoughtful consideration, the *Discovery* and the *Chatham* sailed for the Sandwich Islands. Lieutenant Broughton was ordered to repair to England with these papers, covering the work to that date, without a moment's loss of time.

Leaving the Sandwich Islands in March, 1793, Vancouver with the *Discovery* made the coast at the spot discovered by Señor Quadra's expedition in 1775 and named Porto de la Trinidad in latitude about  $41^{\circ}$  north. While there Mr. Menzies found upon a hill the cross which the Spaniards had erected in taking possession. It was in a state of decay but a portion of the inscription was still legible. Nootka was reached on May 20th, only to find that the *Chatham*, which had arrived about the middle of April, had sailed on May 18th. The Spanish fort on Hog Island had been erected during Vancouver's absence. It mounted eleven nine-pounders and "added greatly to the respectability of the establishment." The *Discovery* saluted the fort, and the honour was returned. The Spanish vessel *San Carlos*, in command of Señor Don Ramon Saavedra, anchored soon after Vancouver's arrival. Señor Fidalgo, the governor of the port, informed the English commander that Saavedra was to supersede him and that being therefore about to return to San Blas he would take charge of and forward any dispatches through that channel to England—an opportunity of which Vancouver readily availed himself.

After a delay of four days Vancouver sailed to the northward to take up his work in the vicinity of Calvert Island where it had ended in the preceding year. Proceeding up Fitzhugh Sound the *Chatham* was met and together the vessels continued the survey of the maze of islands and intricate waterways which form our coast line. Here the work was carried on, generally speaking, by means of boat excursions with the ships as a central point, which from time to time was changed as the more important of the channels were examined and charted. On the 3rd, 4th and 5th of June, 1793, the surveying parties were in Dean's Canal and Cascade Canal. This is the locality which Alexander Mackenzie reached about the 22nd of the next month. Describing the habitations of the natives Vancouver



D<sup>d</sup> George Brown Esq<sup>r</sup>  
 Treasurer of the Company  
 West. Sydney N.S.W.

Sir: (When I have the  
 pleasure to receive a letter from you, I  
 always find it contains a very interesting  
 and useful account of the progress of the  
 colony. I am glad to hear that the  
 number of your subscribers is increasing, and  
 that you are doing well in every respect.  
 I am sure that the success of the  
 colony will be the result of the efforts of  
 the friends of the colony, and that the  
 friends of the colony will be the result of the  
 efforts of the friends of the colony.

Yours very truly  
 George Brown Esq<sup>r</sup>  
 Treasurer of the Company  
 West. Sydney N.S.W.

D<sup>d</sup> George Brown Esq<sup>r</sup>  
 Treasurer of the Company  
 West. Sydney N.S.W.

LETTER WRITTEN BY CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER AT NOOTKA SOUND, SEPT. 9, 1792



says: "These appeared to be well constructed; the boards forming the sides of the houses were well-fitted, and the roofs rose from each side with sufficient inclination to throw off the rain. The gable ends were decorated with curious painting, and near one or two of the more conspicuous mansions were carved figures in large logs of timber, representing a gigantic human form, with strange and uncommonly distorted features."<sup>18</sup>

Not only did Vancouver survey minutely the continental shore and examine the various winding canals, but he paid careful attention also to the habits and customs of the natives, as the above extract shows in reference to their houses. He gives a description of the labret, that strange, disfiguring lip ornament so common in the early days amongst the northern Indians. Some of these were two and a half, and even three and four tenths, inches in length and an inch and a half broad. So too, he noticed the woollen garments, so beautifully woven by these Indians, and the clothing made from pine bark, in some instances with sea-otter fur worked into it and decorated with very fine, well spun, and vari-coloured woollen yarn. As he pursued his investigations in the neighbourhood of Greenville canal and Nepean Sound, as he called them, he noticed that the natives seemed to differ in a trifling degree from those he had been accustomed to see; "they were not taller," he says, "but they were stouter, their faces more round and flat, their hair, coarse, straight, black and cut short to their head; in this respect they differed from any of the tribes of North West America with whom we had met, who, though in various fashions, universally wore their hair long, which was in general of a soft nature, and chiefly of a light or dark brown colour, seldom approaching to black."<sup>19</sup>

Proceeding steadily northward, bestowing the names of his friends on islands and capes, and thus giving a sort of immortality to many who would otherwise have been forgotten, he reached the latitude of the Skeena River. But Vancouver did not see this stream as he had kept along the outside fringe of islands, although he named Port Essington. Here he met three vessels the *Butterworth*, of London, *Pinice Lee Boo* and *Jackall*, all in command of a Captain Brown. The traders saluted with seven guns, Vancouver replied with five.

<sup>18</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 2, p. 272.

<sup>19</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 2, p. 320.



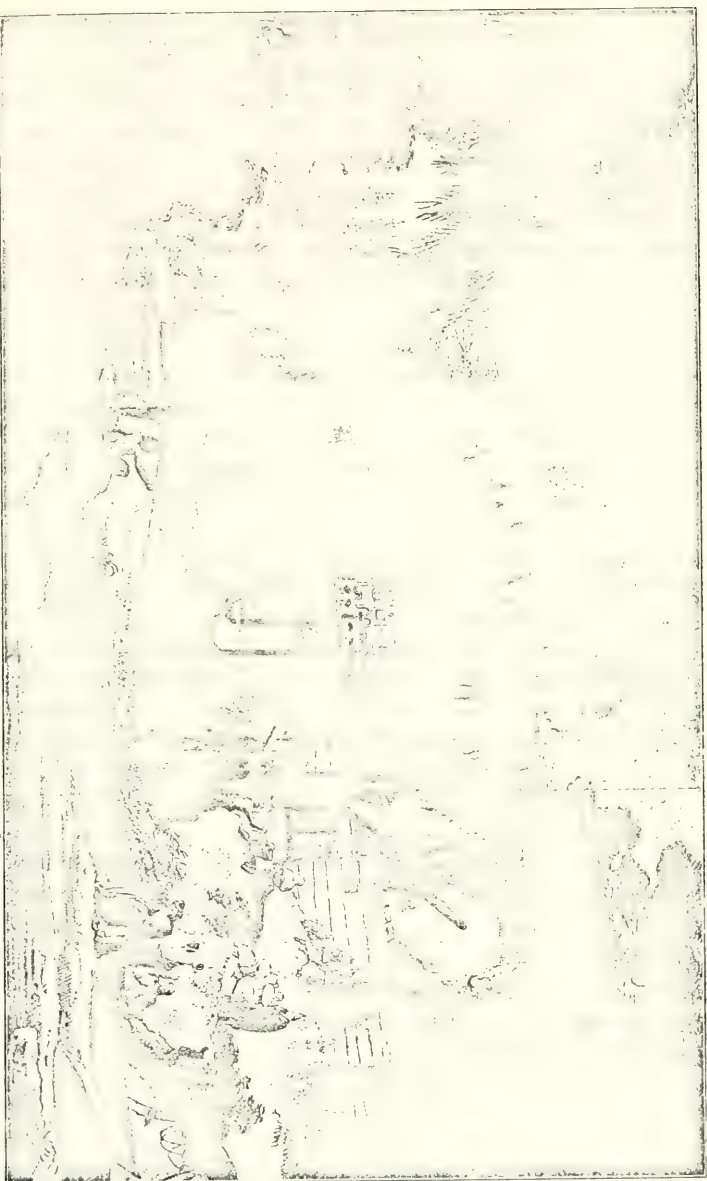


From these vessels it was learned that the vicinity was strewn with dangerous rocks; an offer of one of the trading vessels to serve as a pilot was gladly accepted. Captain Brown spoke of a large opening extending northeastward, whose southern entrance was in latitude  $54^{\circ} 45'$ . This, opined Vancouver, was probably the same as that laid down in Señor Comaano's chart as *Estrecho de Almirante Fuentes*, or De Fonte's Strait. This is the Observatory Inlet and Portland Canal, which figured so prominently in the Alaskan boundary dispute of later years.

In Behm Canal, Vancouver noticed a strange spired rock. At once the Eddystone lighthouse comes to his mind, and New Eddystone takes its place on the map. It is now the middle of August, 1793, and here Vancouver meets and names the hunch-backed salmon. He says it is "the worst eating fish"; that the hateful protuberance is more marked in the male than in the female; and that the mouths of both were made in a kind of hook, resembling the upper mandible of a hawk. Here, too, Vancouver had some trouble with the Indians. Under the guise of honest trade—which he, of course, did not seek—they surrounded his small boat, and incited by an old woman they attempted to steal anything movable in it. They seized the oars, and brandished their spears. For a time things assumed a threatening attitude. The altercation attracted the attention of Mr. Puget in the yawl. He hurried to Vancouver's support, but the situation became so dangerous that Vancouver was compelled, in order to save his crew (whose inaction under his orders was mistaken for pusillanimity) to fire upon their assailants. This action, as unexpected as it was effective, solved the difficulty. The Indians leaped into the sea, putting their canoes between themselves and Vancouver. Before he could follow the affair up, he found that two of his men had been very severely, but not fatally, wounded and required the immediate attention of the surgeon. He was, therefore, reluctantly compelled to desist from teaching the savages a salutary lesson.

About September 20th Vancouver reached Cape Decision in latitude  $56^{\circ}$ . Wishing to spend some time in the examination of the western shore of Queen Charlotte Islands, he accordingly decided to turn his vessels' prows southward at this point. He reached Nootka on October 5th. The only vessel there was the *San Carlos*, laid up for the winter. The *Daedalus*, which he had hoped would





From an old Spanish engraving

CELEBRATION IN HONOUR OF THE COMING OF AGE OF THE DAUGHTER OF THE FAMOUS NOOTKA CHIEF, MAQUINNA, ABOUT 1792



have returned from Port Jackson, had not arrived. A French vessel, *La Flavia*, having on board a very valuable cargo of European commodities for Kamschatka, to be exchanged there for furs with which a cargo of tea was to be purchased in China, had called at Nootka in the course of the summer. Such incidents show the growing importance of that port.

After remaining only three days the *Discovery* and the *Chatham* sailed for the Californian coast. Between San Francisco and Monterey the *Daedalus* was met, northward bound. On this visit Vancouver received treatment the very reverse of that which Quadra had accorded to him in the preceding year. Señor Arrillaga, the commandant, refused to allow any persons except the officers to land unless actually engaged in obtaining wood and water or other necessary services, and then only within sight of a Spanish officer. He further required that all persons return to the ships by sun-down; and while he permitted an observatory to be erected he would not except the observer from this rule. Lastly he requested that the utmost expedition be employed, so that the vessels, even under these iron-clad arrangements, might depart at the earliest moment. Considering the whole matter, Vancouver rightly concluded, immediately upon finishing his examination of the California coast, to sail to the Sandwich Islands, where he doubted not that the uneducated inhabitants would cheerfully afford the accommodation so unkindly denied him at San Francisco and Monterey. About December 14, 1793, the little fleet sailed from the American coast and arrived at the Sandwich Islands on January 8, 1794.

From that time until the middle of March, Vancouver was engaged in exploring and charting the Sandwich Islands. Sailing again for the American coast with the *Discovery* and the *Chatham*—the *Daedalus* having previously left for Australia—Vancouver sighted it in latitude  $55^{\circ}$  on April 4, 1794. As his work during this—his third—season was entirely outside our boundaries it will not be followed in detail. In August the exploration was concluded and Vancouver informs us that Mr. Whidby took possession of the whole coast from New Georgia northwestward to Cape Spencer. Describing that event, which took place on the shores of Prince Frederick's Sound, while the surveying parties stopped to dine, he says: "The colours were displayed, the boats' crews drawn up under



arms, and possession taken under the discharge of three vollies of musketry, with all the other formalities usual on such occasions, and a double allowance of grog was served to the respective crews, for the purpose of drinking His Majesty's health." How different from stately and solemn Spanish ceremony already described!<sup>20</sup>

Vancouver now sailed for Nootka Sound, where he arrived on September 2nd. Lying at anchor at Friendly Cove he found the Spanish vessels, *Princessa*, *Aranzuzu*, and *San Carlos*, the *Phoenix*, a barque from Bengal commanded by Captain Moor, the sloop *Lee Boo*, which he had met in the preceding year, and the *Washington*, now rigged as a brig and commanded by Captain Kendrick. Brigadier General Don José Manuel Alava, the new Governor of Nootka, had only arrived the day before in the *Princessa*. This appointment had taken place owing to the death in March, 1794, at San Blas, of our highly valuable and much esteemed friend Señor Quadra. In relating this circumstance Vancouver makes very plain the great admiration and respect he entertained for the Spanish representative. He tells us that the sudden news of his death "produced the deepest regret for the loss of a character so amiable and so truly ornamental to civil society."<sup>21</sup>

Vancouver soon learned that Alava expected soon to receive the credentials necessary to enable him to finish the pending negotiation respecting the cession of territory mentioned in the Nootka Convention on which he and Quadra had been unable to agree. Although two years had since gone by Vancouver had received no communication thereon either of a public or private nature. Thinking it highly probable that instructions would reach him by the same conveyance as that by which Alava's were transmitted he determined to remain for a time at Friendly Cove. The necessity of repairs to his vessels, of obtaining new planking and spars, of erecting an observatory to check his recent surveys, and of preparing new cordage added many valid reasons for a short delay at this historic spot.

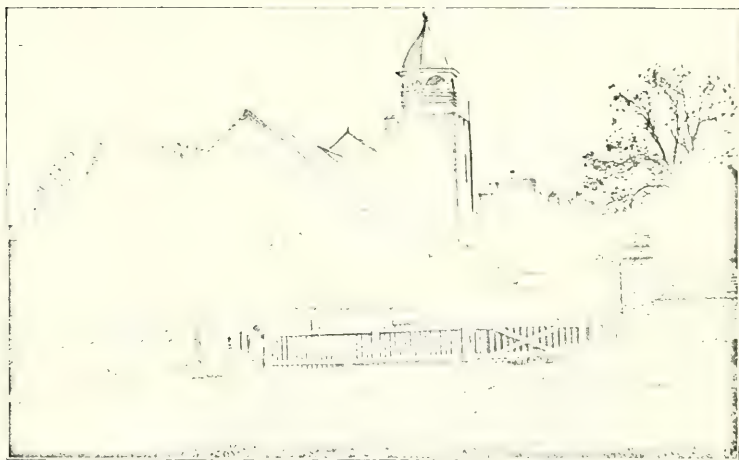
About six weeks were spent at Nootka on this occasion. In that interval the *Jenny* of Bristol, now commanded by Captain Adamson, and the *Jackall* of Captain Brown's fleet, arrived at this Mecca of the maritime furtraders. Vancouver and Alava made a state visit

<sup>20</sup> Vancouver's Voyage, Quarto ed., vol. 3, p. 285.

<sup>21</sup> Id., p. 301.



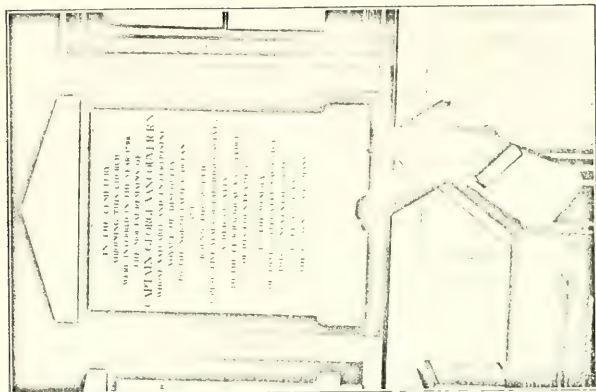
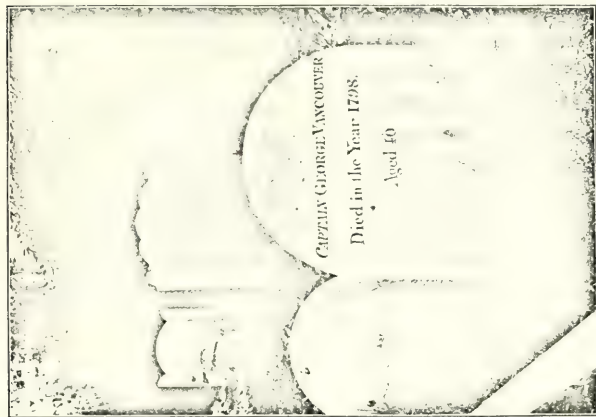




PETERSHAM CHURCHYARD, SURREY, ENGLAND

Where stands the tomb and monumental tablet erected to the memory of Captain George Vancouver by the Hudson's Bay Company





CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER'S TOMB AND MEMORIAL TABLET  
Erected by the Hudson's Bay Company to his memory in Petersham Church, Surrey, England



to Maquinna at Tashees. The barbaric splendour of their reception at the hands of this celebrated personage Vancouver describes very fully—the lengthy, earnest address of welcome, the grotesque group of painted performers, their savage and barbarous appearance, their peculiar music, their grotesque masks and strange musical dresses—then the giving of gifts again and again until the stock that the visitors had brought was completely exhausted. A few days after their return to the cove the Spanish officers were Vancouver's guests upon the *Discovery* and no instructions relative to the cession of the territory at Nootka having arrived, on the 16th October, 1794, Captain Vancouver ordered the anchor to be weighed, the sails were unfurled, and the *Discovery* bade adieu to our coasts forever. The *Discovery* and the *Chatham* after a short stay at Monterey sailed in December, 1794, for England. In a heavy gale the *Discovery's* main mast was sprung, and scurvy having made its appearance the vessel called at Valparaiso for the necessary assistance. Resuming the voyage, Cape Horn was rounded and the *Chatham* arrived in London on October 17, 1795, the *Discovery* three days later.

After his return Vancouver devoted himself entirely to the preparation of his Journal for publication. He had corrected all the proofs except the last few pages when he died at the old Star and Garter Inn, Richmond Hill, Surrey, May 10, 1798. He was buried in the church yard of St. Peters, at Petersham, on the 18th.<sup>22</sup> Considering that Vancouver was not yet forty-one years of age at the time of his death all must marvel at his abilities which caused him at thirty-four years of age to be selected for such an important office, and that enabled him to carry it through in a manner which has evoked the highest praise from every student of our history and geography. It was eminently proper that the name of such a man should have been selected for the great, bustling city at the terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

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<sup>22</sup> Walbran's Place Names, Vancouver.



## CHAPTER IX

SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE

While British, American, French and Spanish expeditions were exploring the littoral, a new force was at work in the interior of the Continent. At first the Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, known in history as the Hudson's Bay Company, did not extend their operations far beyond the shores of that inland sea. It was the policy of the Company to bring the Indians to Fort Churchill, Fort Nelson, or Fort Prince of Wales, to barter their rich furs. This policy saved the expense of establishing inland forts, and the Company's servants from the attacks of savages, who, however amenable they might be far from their homes on the shores of Hudson's Bay, could not be expected to be so tractable in their own hunting grounds. The furs were shipped direct to England through Hudson's Straits. Thus a century and more before, the great wheat fields of the Middle West became the granary of the Empire, the route, now proposed as one of the outlets for that fertile region, was used by the homing ships of the great Company.

The trade of the Adventurers was lucrative, and, almost from the time of the granting of their charter in 1670, large dividends were paid to the share-holders.

But commerce could not always be carried on in peace and security, even in the bleak and isolated territories of Hudson's Bay. In the stormy period that preceded the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, the forts of the Company were more than once attacked and sometimes captured by French expeditions, in one of which La Pérouse, the brilliant navigator who commanded the ill-fated French expedition to the Pacific in 1785-8, played an active part. In the time of these hostilities no dividends were declared, but so rich was the field that a year or two of uninterrupted peace offset the losses.

Long before Canada was lost to France, the traders of the St.





Lawrence had crossed the Great Lakes and entered into communication with the tribes of the wild region to the northward of Lake Superior; but it was left to the gallant Pierre Gaultier de La Verendrye to pierce the heart of the continent. From his earliest years it had been his ambition to reach the Sea of the West, upon the shores of which he longed to plant the French flag. Verendrye was by nature an explorer; he became a furtrader by force of circumstances. Unable to procure from the Governor of Canada a commission to explore the interior of the continent, or even financial support for his enterprise, he was forced to adopt the role of trader, as by that means only could he hope to achieve his ambition. Neither the Governor, nor the merchants of Montreal, cared for western exploration, except as a means by which new territories, rich in fur, might be brought under their sway. In Verendrye worked that mysterious influence which has ever impelled men of Aryan race to follow the path of the evening sun. As commander of the trading-post of Nipigon, he stood on the threshold of that undiscovered land which barred the way to the Western Sea. Here, from the natives, he heard of great waters and great territories that lay far beyond Lake Superior, and these stories kindled in him a consuming desire to reach the western verge of the continent.

In the summer of 1731 Verendrye and his three sons, in the guise of furtraders, set out to solve one of the greatest geographical problems of the age. They were the first Europeans to build forts in the Middle West. On the shore of The Lake of the Woods, Verendrye erected a stockade from twelve to fifteen feet in height, in the form of an oblong to guard his rough cabins of logs and clay and bark. The rude establishment was christened Fort St. Charles. From this base Verendrye explored north, west, and south, building forts and trading with the natives even as far as the Mandan villages; but ever chafing at delays and untoward incidents that retarded his progress westward. The brave Frenchman was not to achieve his ambition; although his son, while in the country near the head waters of the Missouri, caught a glimpse of one of the eastern spurs of the "Mountains of Bright Stones," the name by which the Rocky Mountains were known to the Indians of those parts. No Frenchman was destined to lead an expedition into the land beyond that great barrier. From 1732 until 1743 the Verendryes, father



and sons, sought to pierce the western mystery, but without avail. They were defeated but not beaten. The father retired from the country, but only to plead his cause at the Viceregal Court of Canada. He was promoted and decorated with the coveted Cross of St. Louis, and authorized by Governor Galissonière to continue his explorations, yet no financial assistance was forthcoming. After devoting his life to his cherished purpose, Verendrye, in his declining years, could find none to help him to realize his dream. He died in December, 1749.

Verendrye led the way to that immense preserve where, in after years, rich harvests were reaped by contending traders. He left to posterity a noble example of fortitude and duty well-done. After his death the trade in the region he had discovered was continued, but it did not prosper.

Even while the French still held the great interior, an effort was made, in 1754-5, by a young officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, named Anthony Hendry (or Hendey), to reach the far west. It appears that Hendry, who was a native of the Isle of Wight, had been outlawed in 1748 for smuggling; he then entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company and volunteered to go inland with the natives, who traded at the forts on Hudson's Bay. After the usual exciting experiences, incidental to travel in a new country, Hendry reached the broad waters of the Saskatchewan, and to him belongs the honour of being the first Englishman to launch his frail canoe upon that lordly river of the western plains. He found on this river the fort built by De La Corne the year before. "On our arrival," says Hendry in his journal, which is preserved at Hudson's Bay House, "two Frenchmen came to the waterside and in a very genteel manner invited me into their home, which I readily accepted. One of them asked me if I had any letter from my master, and where, on what design, I was going inland. I answered I had no letter and that I was sent to view the country, and intended to return in the spring. He told me the master (presumably De La Corne) and men were gone down to Montreal with the furs, and that they must detain me till their return. However, they were very kind, and at night I went to my tent and told Attickasish, or Little Deer, my leader, that had the charge of me, who smiled and said they dared



not. I sent them two feet of tobacco, which was very acceptable to them." <sup>1</sup>

That meeting of the young English explorer with the French traders of the Saskatchewan is of more than passing interest—as Mr. L. J. Burpee, the learned author of "The Search for the Western Sea," justly observes. In all the records of the adventure on the great plains, no mention is made of the "French and English coming face to face west of the Great Lakes while the former were still in possession of Canada." <sup>2</sup> It is true that they had met and fought time and again in the marshes of New England and New France, and on the shores of the mediterranean sea named after that heroic, but unfortunate, Henry Hudson; but hitherto the French had been supreme in the Northwest. It requires no great stretch of imagination, therefore, to realize that the French, despite their politeness, must have been chagrined at the appearance of Hendry in the heart of their preserve. No attempt seems to have been made by the French traders to put into execution their threat of detaining the English explorer, for, on the following day he continued his journey. Hendry was not only to spy out the land; he was also to use every means in his power to induce the tribes of the interior to carry their furs to York Fort in the spring. His mission, however, was not particularly successful. The natives could not be persuaded to journey so far, to so little purpose. Yet some of the Assiniboines promised to accompany him and faithfully kept their word. In Assiniboia the young explorer witnessed the strange sight of vast herds of buffalo "grazing like English cattle" on the plains.

Hendry wintered among the Blackfeet, and his journals contain many interesting particulars respecting that bold and warlike tribe. In the spring he departed on his homeward journey, in due course arriving at a French trading post a few miles below the Grand Forks of the Saskatchewan, where he was kindly treated. .

The explorer's narrative throws much light upon the methods of the French traders, who were preeminently fitted, alike from their sagacity, engaging politeness, and appreciation of the Indian character, to carry on their traffic in the lawless wild. "It is surprising," writes Hendry, "to observe, what an influence the French have

<sup>1</sup> Burpee, *Western Sea*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>2</sup> Burpee, *Western Sea*, p. 120.



over the natives. I am certain he (referring to the officer in charge) hath got above 1,000 of the richest skins." He adds "The French speak several (Indian) languages to perfection; they have the advantage of us in every shape; and if they had Brazile tobacco, which they have not, would entirely cut off our trade."<sup>3</sup>

A quarter of a century later Jonathan Carver, a son of Connecticut, attempted to realize the dream of the old French explorers, but apart from its motive, his exploration is not of surpassing interest. Still, his narrative is notable, if for no other reason than that it gave to the world the beautiful name "Oregon." Carver left Boston in 1776, proceeding by way of Michilimachinac, Green Bay, and the Fox, Wisconsin, and Mississippi rivers to St. Pierre, where he sojourned for some months. Finding that he could make no progress westward of that point, he changed his course and made Lake Superior with the intention of following the route of the furtraders, over the northern lakes and rivers, to its farthest extent, and thence to the Pacific. Again disappointed he returned to Boston.

During his mid-continental tour, Carver heard many marvellous stories as to the mountains, lakes, and rivers of the vast territories on the borders of which he ventured. These stories found expression in his journal, in which he described great rivers, which, from their sources in the centre of the continent, extended to the four points of the compass, thus providing water communication north and south, and east and west, even to the shores of that great ocean concerning which there had been so much speculation. Carver also told of the "Mountains of Bright Stones," and the "Oregon," or "River of the West."

Failing to obtain either that recognition or support for his western enterprise, which he deemed its importance deserved, he abandoned the project for others. Thereafter Jonathan Carver subsided into obscurity, his untrustworthy narrative alone preserving his name from oblivion.

Then, farther to the northward, the Hudson's Bay Company sought, in an examination of Arctic tundras, to add to the world's stock of geographical knowledge, and at the same time, perhaps, to sufficiently set forth its zeal in the search for the Northwest Passage, which, in the charter of 1670, had been specifically included as

<sup>3</sup> Burpee, *Western Sea*, p. 136.





one of the Company's especial duties. Samuel Hearne steps forth from the obscurity of an humble origin and occupation, and achieves fame as an explorer in the short space of two years. Hearne however was but the instrument; it was the half-breed Governor of Fort Prince of Wales, the noted Moses Norton, who launched the idea and equipped and despatched the expedition. At that time no one knew how far the continent extended from east to west. It was at first almost universally believed that at most a few hundred leagues separated the North and South Seas. As explorations were pushed farther afield, it became apparent that the continent reached farther and yet farther westward. The early French and British explorers expected to find the Pacific washing the western foot-hills of the "Shining Mountains." Hearne, however, from the evidence he had gathered, believed the continent of America to be "much wider than many people imagined, particularly Robson, who thought that the Pacific Ocean was but a few days' journey from the west coast of Hudson's Bay. This, however, is so far from being the case, that when I was at my greatest western distance, upward of five hundred miles from the Prince of Wales Fort, the natives, my guides, well knew that many tribes of Indians lay to the west of us and they knew no end to the land in that direction; nor have I met with any Indians, either northern or southern, that ever had seen the sea to the westward." Three times Hearne sallied forth from Fort Prince of Wales to find and explore the "Far-Off-Metal River"<sup>4</sup> of the natives. Twice he was left in the lurch by his Indian guides and forced to return to his base; but Hearne was not a man to be balked, and once more he left the fort, on December 7, 1770, for he was to travel with dogs and sleds, while the snow covered the earth with its even mantle. After many exciting adventures and narrow escapes, he reached the land of the Eskimo, where he was the unwilling witness of a bloody attack by the Chipewyans upon that innocent and inoffensive people. "The poor unhappy victims," says Hearne, "were surprised in the midst of their sleep and had neither time nor power to make any resistance; men, women and children, in all upwards of twenty, ran out of their tents stark naked and endeavoured to make their escape; but the Indians having possession of all the land side, to no place could they fly for shelter. One alternative

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<sup>4</sup> Burpee, *Western Sea*, p. 139.



only remained, that of jumping into the river; but as none of them attempted it they all fell victims to Indian barbarity." A young girl was speared beside the explorer; as she fell she writhed round his legs; nor did his pleading save her, for the savages, asking him contemptuously if he wanted an Eskimo wife, thrust their weapons into the unfortunate creature. At this harrowing sight Hearne could not restrain his tears.

At last the intrepid explorer reached the mouth of the Coppermine River, and observed it to be in latitude  $71^{\circ} 54'$  north and longitude  $120^{\circ} 30'$ , which position, however, gave the river an outlet two hundred miles too far to the north, as is proved by Franklin's accurate observation, which marks the point where the river embouches into the Arctic as  $67^{\circ} 40' 50''$  north and  $115^{\circ} 36' 49''$  west. Here Hearne erected a cairn and took formal possession of the country on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company. He then began to retrace his steps, but before doing so, he examined the copper mines of which so much had been said, only to find that they were "nothing but a jumble of rocks and gravel." On his homeward journey the explorer followed the shores of Great Slave Lake, and crossed this sheet of water to the mouth of Slave River; then, taking an easterly course, he arrived at Fort Prince of Wales on June 30, 1771.

Gradually the vast prairies, and the network of rivers and lakes that provide means of communication in the central portion of the continent, became known to the furtrader. But, in the year 1763 the Conspiracy of Pontiac and successive Indian wars rendered the central plains unsafe for the peddlers and caused a temporary suspension of the traffic. It was not until about the year 1771, that British traders could enter with safety the territory of the Saskatchewan, on which river the most remote of the old French posts had been built. The subsequent progress of the furtraders may be said to have corresponded with the wishes of the Indians and the success of the first enterprises.

At first the whole trade was conducted by the unsupported effort of individuals. The trader, wintering with a newly discovered band of Indians, or on some favourable spot, would hear of tribes still more remote, among whom provisions might be obtained, and trade pursued with little danger of competition. To the hunting grounds of these he would naturally repair, and while he was suffered to



remain alone he might obtain furs at a reasonable rate. But, as all men had the right to traffic at any place, the first discoverer of an eligible situation generally soon found himself followed by other traders, who were ever ready to reap where they had not sown. In these circumstances, the furtrader, naturally enough, endeavoured by every means in his power to secure to himself the preference of the Indians and to injure his competitor. Thus, in the Indian territories of the West, each man became a master unto himself, and took the law into his own hands. As a consequence, both the Indians and the trade suffered. The natives were bribed with rum, and this trafficking in strong spirits soon had a disastrous effect. While this warfare raged, mutual interest suggested the necessity of establishing a common, or co-operative, association as the only means of ending once for all so injurious a competition.

About the year 1779, nine distinct interests became parties to an agreement for one year, by virtue of which the whole trade was rendered common property. The success which attended this measure led to a second and similar agreement in the succeeding year, and that to a further agreement, which was to last for three years. Thus co-operation gradually became a recognized principle among the traders. However, an agreement for a short term was found not to work as well as had been anticipated, chiefly for the reason that the members of the association were naturally less anxious to stand by its articles than to prepare themselves for its termination, and the consequent return to the old order of things. It seemed almost impossible that out of this chaos of conflicting interests there could be formed an association so powerful as to unite in one brotherhood, the jealous traders. Yet this was accomplished. In 1783-84 practically all the factions were united in one great association, which assumed the historic name—The North West Company. At first the pact was for five years only, but so effective did it prove in eradicating evils, and so successful were the operations under it, that the association was continued from time to time until at last a permanent organization, although still subject to agreement,<sup>5</sup> became possible.

The fierce rivalries of the independent furtraders were thus abolished. The North West Company established upon the principle of co-operation, promoted, whilst that principle was adhered

<sup>5</sup> Origin and Progress of the North West Company, London, 1811.



to, the welfare of all concerned. It prevented the animosities, violence, and losses that before the days of coalition had become of every-day occurrence in the fur territories. No one thing, perhaps, is more significant of the good results that accrued from the policy than the fact that the returns of the furtrade increased from thirty thousand pounds in 1784 to one hundred and fifty thousand pounds in 1810.<sup>6</sup> Another conspicuous result, in the decrease in the consumption of spirituous liquors was brought about by the amalgamation of the contending forces. In the year 1800, ten thousand and ninety-eight gallons were taken into the territory, but in the year 1803, when the North West Company met with strong opposition from independent traders, the consumption increased to twenty-one thousand two hundred and ninety-nine gallons. After the company had defeated or placated its opponents, the average consumption dropped to nine thousand seven hundred gallons in the five years ending with 1810.

At the outset the company had an opponent worthy of its steel in the X Y Company, formed by certain malcontents who refused to join the larger association. Amongst these were the notorious Peter Pond and the resolute Alexander Mackenzie. The struggle, however, did not last long. In 1787 the two Canadian companies amalgamated. At a later period the X Y Company was revived by a few Nor'Westers, who had become dissatisfied with the autocratic behaviour of the choleric Simon McTavish, nicknamed by his associates "le Premier," or "le Marquis." In 1793 Alexander Mackenzie returned to the X Y Company, and for several years he was the master mind of that organization. Simon McTavish died in 1804 or 1805, and shortly afterwards the X Y Company again united with its rival.

In the thirty-eight years of its existence the North West Company revolutionized the trade, consolidated its interests, and extended its sphere of influence even far beyond "The Mountains of Bright Stones." At one time the company possessed more than eighty forts or trading stations in the western territories, several of which were west of the Rocky Mountains. The influence of the bourgeois, as the officers of the association were termed, extended from Montreal, across the Great Lakes, to the farthestmost northern and southern limits of that vast territory which their daring and prowess had

<sup>6</sup> Origin and Progress of the North West Company, London, 1811.





brought under their sway. In short, the great central and western region was their empire and they governed it firmly, and, on the whole, justly.

If the North West Company thought that by this union, it had once and forever put an end to trade warfare, it had reckoned without its host. As the operations of the Nor'Westers, as the partners and servants of the Company came to be called, extended farther afield, they tapped the very sources of the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company. It was the masterly policy of the traders of Montreal to establish posts in the most remote territories, as a result of which the Indians found that it was no longer necessary to make far journeys to dispose of their pelts. They naturally preferred to trade at the nearest fort, rather than to carry their furs to the shores of Hudson's Bay. Just as soon as this policy was adopted, the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company declined. For almost a century the Adventurers had scarcely moved out of their strongholds on the western shore of Hudson's Bay. Indeed, heretofore there had been no occasion for their going to meet the savage in the wilderness.

It was hardly to be expected that the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company would tamely submit to these encroachments on the part of their opponents. The enterprising daring of the united fur-traders rendered a conflict inevitable. Roused to action, the great chartered company resolutely set to work to frustrate the tactics of its opponents. At each advantageous point it built a fort, at first confining its operations to the more northern part of the field; but finding its trade molested even there, it determined to extend its system of forts over the whole country. This rivalry gave birth to a bitter feud. Wherever a Nor'Wester built his rude fort, the Hudson's Bay Company would plant one beside it. Hence two forts were often erected within sight of each other—a novel situation of which the Indian took full advantage, demanding more exorbitant prices for his pelts. But of all things, the Indian loved rum best. As long as one organization controlled the situation the traffic could be conducted without intoxicants, but so soon as this deadly rivalry was started, rum again became a common article of barter. Unscrupulous traders did not hesitate when hard pushed by an opponent to seduce the Indian from his allegiance with liberal potations. Such conditions could not exist without destroying trade. So keen and so



bitter was the rivalry, and so enamoured were the Indians of the "fire-water" of the traders, that in a short time whole districts were depleted of fur-bearing animals. The North West Company however, prospered, for its energetic bourgeois were ever moving the frontier farther west and north and south, reaching territories where the Hudson's Bay Company hesitated to follow. Before the latter company had occupied the Middle West its opponents had planted their flag on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains. While this civil war, for it was scarcely less, was engrossing the energies and activities of the opposing forces, there were yet men amongst the traders to whom exploration meant more than gain. The search for the Western Sea had been neither forgotten nor abandoned.

In the Northwest at that time was a young man, named Alexander Mackenzie, a Scotsman of good lineage. He it was who helped to organize the X Y Company, but he was now with and for the North West Company. In the last decade but one of the eighteenth century, he guided the destinies of Fort Chippewayan on Athabasca Lake; though like Verendrye, he thought more of exploration than of sordid traffic. Samuel Hearne's exploit, of nearly twenty years before, was, to him, both an object lesson and an achievement to be emulated. In 1789, therefore, Mackenzie set out to follow the northern outlet of Great Slave Lake to the Arctic Ocean. He was successful; and so another highway—for all rivers were highways to the furtrader—was placed on the map, and by so much was the knowledge of the geography of the Arctic coast increased. In honour of its explorer the river was named Mackenzie. Now the region, in which had been placed by geographers of old, the famous Straits of Maldonado, and the fanciful waterways of de Fonte, was indeed reduced. In the same year (1789) in which Mackenzie made this memorable excursion, the Spaniards on the Pacific were seizing the vessels of another British furtrading company, and fortifying themselves on the American shores of the North Pacific.

Upon his return to Fort Chippewayan, Mackenzie decided to go to London, there to learn how to reckon accurately latitude and longitude. Lack of this knowledge had more than once perturbed him while descending the Mackenzie River, and he had determined to fit himself at the earliest opportunity for the yet greater task he had



assigned himself—an expedition to the shores of the Western Sea, so long sought by French explorers.

The overland journeys of the furtrader were no less important than the coastwise explorations of the mariner; nor were his expeditions less arduous or less hazardous than those of the men who voyaged the trackless ocean. He had to pass from one savage tribe to another, generally with a mere handful of men, and it was only by the exercise of patience and diplomacy that he could overcome the prejudices, armed resistance, and treachery of the natives.

Even while Vancouver was exploring the coast, an expedition was being prepared at Fort Chippewayan to cross the continent. Alexander Mackenzie, having returned from London with his newly acquired knowledge of astronomy and surveying, was bending all his energies to the attainment of his great ambition. Having made every necessary preparation, he left Fort Chippewayan on October 10, 1792, with the determination of wintering on the Peace River, as near the mountains as possible, in order to take advantage of the opening of navigation in the early spring. Towards the end of October, Mackenzie arrived at his wintering place, whither two of his men had preceded him. The men, exhausted by the hardships of their journey, were disappointed at finding no houses ready. The Indians had prevented the completion of the post.

No sooner had the explorer's tent been pitched than he called before him the unruly natives and soundly rated them for the trouble they had caused. He said he would treat them with kindness if their behaviour merited it, but that he would be "equally severe if they failed in those returns" which he had a "right to expect from them." Mackenzie then presented the natives with a quantity of rum, which he naïvely recommended should be used with discretion.

Such incidents, it may be presumed, were of common occurrence in the fur territories; yet this scene exhibits in a very interesting manner the delicate relations that existed between the natives and the white man at that time. It seems little short of marvellous that a handful of men, by cajolery or threats, or by a diplomatic admixture of both, should be able to preserve their hold upon the lawless savages, who outnumbered them by hundreds to one.<sub>s</sub>

Mackenzie's winter quarters were situated near the junction of a large stream with the Peace River. On account of its situation



the place was called Fort Fork. In the month of May, 1793, six canoes were despatched to Fort Chippewayan with the furs collected in the winter, and then Mackenzie, relieved for a time of such sordid details made final preparations for his great enterprise. The frail bark canoe, which was to carry the adventurers on the turbulent currents of the rivers and streams of the Rocky Mountain region, was but twenty-five feet long within, twenty-six inches deep, and four feet nine inches wide. It was so light that two men could carry it three or four miles without resting. This little vessel carried provisions, presents (without which no trader ventured into a new country), arms, ammunition, and baggage—in all three thousand pounds.

The party consisted of Alexander Mackenzie, Alexander Mackay, six voyageurs and two Indians to act as hunters and interpreters—ten in all.<sup>7</sup>

Such was the equipment of the expedition that, after untold hardships and dangers, was to carry British sovereignty across the continent to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. It seems almost incredible that, with such meagre equipment, so much was accomplished. Yet in that adventurous age, no doubt, the expedition was considered well-found and ample for the purpose. Ten men, six of whom were voyageurs and two Indians, were to assay a task that might well have appalled the stoutest hearts. But the careless and happy-go-lucky French-Canadian cared naught for danger until it was encountered; and if anxiety cast its shadow upon the mind of the leader, his elation at the thought that he was at least to embark upon his great enterprise did not allow it to obtrude.

On May 9, 1793, Mackenzie left his winter quarters. At first the track led through a country the beauty of which evoked the admiration of the explorer. "The ground rises at intervals," it is recorded in the journal of the expedition, "to a considerable height, and stretching inwards to a considerable distance; at every interval or pause in the rise, there is a very gently-ascending space or lawn, which is alternate with abrupt precipices to the summit of the whole, or, at least as far as the eye could distinguish. This magnificent theatre of nature has all the decorations which the trees and animals of the country can afford it: groves of poplars in every shape vary

<sup>7</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, pp. 151-2.





the scene; and their intervals are enlivened with vast herds of elks and buffaloes: the former choosing the steeps and uplands, and the later preferring the plains. At this time the buffaloes were attended with their young ones, who were frisking about them; and it appeared that the elks would soon exhibit the same enlivening circumstance. The whole country displayed an exuberant verdure; the trees that bear a blossom were advancing fast to that delightful appearance, and the velvet rind of their branches, reflecting the oblique rays of a rising or setting sun, added a splendid gaiety to the scene, which no expressions of mine are qualified to describe."<sup>8</sup>

As the canoe passed up the Peace River, the country assumed a different aspect. The park-like prairie, with its wooded eminences and verdant lawns, gave place to rugged and precipitous hills, and these in turn to the wild and awe-inspiring grandeur of the Rocky Mountains, whose snow crowned peaks stretched north and south in one long unbroken chain. Into this wilderness plunged the little party. As Mackenzie neared the mountain pass the current became wild and tumultuous, rushing headlong between craggy hills and precipitous walls of rock. In the great canyons of the Rocky Mountains the Peace River belies its name and becomes a foaming cascade, or a series of cascades, that even daunted the voyageurs, bred, as they were, to the task of navigating dangerous rapids. The hazards and difficulties of the enterprise continued to increase. "We now continued," says Mackenzie in his entry of May 20th, "our toilsome and perilous progress with the line west by north, and as we proceeded the rapidity of the current increased, so that in the distance of two miles we were obliged to unload four times, and carry everything but the canoe; indeed, in many places, it was with the utmost difficulty that we could prevent her from being dashed in pieces against the rocks by the violence of the eddies. At five we had proceeded to where the river was one continued rapid. Here we again took everything out of the canoe, in order to tow her up with the line, though the rocks were so shelving as greatly to increase the toil and hazard of that operation. At length, however, the agitation of the water was so great, that a wave striking on the bow of the canoe broke the line, and filled us with inexpressible dismay, as it appeared impossible that the vessel could escape from being

<sup>8</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, 1801, pp. 154-5.



dashed to pieces, and those who were in her from perishing. Another wave, however, more propitious than the former, drove her out of the tumbling water, so that the men were enabled to bring her ashore, and though she had been carried over rocks by these swells which left them naked a moment after, the canoe had received no material injury. The men were, however, in such a state from their late alarm, that it would not only have been unavailing but imprudent, to have proposed any further progress at present, particularly as the river above us, as far as we could see, was one white sheet of foaming water.”<sup>9</sup> Of this place, he observed, “The river is not more than fifty yards wide, and flows between stupendous rocks, from whence huge fragments sometimes tumble down, and falling from such an height, dash into small stones, with sharp points.”<sup>10</sup>

Such were the daily experiences of the travellers. Small wonder is it that even the stout heart of the French-Canadian quailed as he advanced into this region, where Nature had erected every barrier that could possibly be devised to prevent the progress of Man. The voyageurs rebelled against the hardships of the way and clamoured to return. But the master-spirit of the enterprise would brook no opposition to his long-cherished plan. By the exercise of his authority, or by softer measures of persuasion, Mackenzie calmed the fears of his men and prevailed upon them to renew their allegiance. On this occasion, as on many others, Mackenzie proved himself a born reader. He treated the French-Canadians as a kind father would treat his wayward children, and, as often as he was called upon to give heart to his people, he never failed to overcome their fears and to unite them to his purpose.

In the course of the journey through the Peace River Pass, the canoe frequently had to be carried long distances. At one place it was necessary to cut a road over a precipitous mountain; the trees were felled parallel with the path, but not separated entirely from the stumps, “so that they might form a kind of railing on either side.” All the baggage and the canoe were carried along this primitive highway with laborious effort. The canoe was literally warped up the mountain, the line being doubled and fastened to successive

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<sup>9</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 173.

<sup>10</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 175.



stumps. Three days were consumed in carrying the equipment over this portage of more than seven miles.

On the evening of the third day, to the relief of all, the party arrived at the river, a short distance above the canyon. At this place "the stream rushed with an astonishing but silent velocity between perpendicular rocks, which are not more than thirty-five yards asunder. When the water is high it runs over those rocks in a channel three times that breadth, where it is bounded by far more elevated precipices. In the former are deep round holes, some of which are full of water, while others are empty, in whose bottom are small round stones, as smooth as marble. Some of these natural cylinders would contain two hundred gallons. At a small distance below the first of these rocks, the channel widens in a kind of zig-zag progression, and it is really awful to behold with what infinite force the water drives against the rocks on one side, and with what impetuous strength it is repelled to the other: it then falls back, as it were, into a more straight but rugged passage, over which it is tossed in high, foaming, half-formed billows, as far as the eye could follow it."<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the party embarked upon the tide.

Arriving at the fork formed by the junction of the Parsnip and Finlay rivers, Mackenzie ascended the former. It was now the end of May, and the river was in flood and the hardships endured in stemming the powerful current so disheartened the voyageurs that again they openly rebelled. "I therefore," says Mackenzie, "employed those arguments which were the best calculated to calm their immediate discontents, as well as to encourage their future hopes, though, at the same time, I delivered my sentiments in such a manner as to convince them that I was determined to proceed."<sup>12</sup> The country on either hand was rugged and mountainous, yet on all sides were seen evidences of the industrious beaver. "In no part of the North-West," wrote Mackenzie, "did I see so much beaver-work within an equal distance." To the explorer these indications of a lucrative trade must have been of peculiar interest.

Thus, as it were, fighting their way inch by inch, the men neared the headwaters of the Parsnip River. On the 5th of June, Mackenzie and Mackay left the canoe to ascend an adjacent moun-

<sup>11</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 180.

<sup>12</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 186.



tain, hoping that they might obtain therefrom a view of the interior. Little could be seen from the height, however, because of the thick forest; so Mackenzie climbed a high tree, from whose top he obtained a panoramic view of the surrounding country. On the west extended a range of snowy mountains, between which and another high ridge of land there appeared to be an opening that was thought to mark the course of a river. Upon their return to the Parsnip, Mackenzie and Mackay found neither the men nor the canoe. A fire was lighted to attract the attention of the voyageurs, and branches were sent adrift down the current, as a message to the men that their leader was ahead. Mackenzie himself walked along the bank in the blaze of the afternoon sun, tormented by swarms of gnats and mosquitoes; but without result. Nor was Mackay more successful in obtaining news of the missing party. Mackenzie feared that the men had seized the opportunity to desert, or that they had been lost in a rapid. Perplexed and distressed by these conjectures, and upbraiding himself for his imprudence in leaving his people in such a dangerous situation, the explorer encamped for the night. Scarcely had he retired, however, than the evening stillness was broken by the report of musket, the welcome signal that Mackay had found the party. Mackenzie at once proceeded to join his men, from whom he learned that the canoe had been wrecked and that they had experienced far greater toil and hardship than on any former occasion. These asseverations the explorer pretended to believe, and sought to comfort his men with a "consolatory dram." He was convinced, however, that the passage might have been made if exertions had not been relaxed.

A few days later the explorer met two natives, one of whom drew his knife and presented it in token of submission. These Indians had heard of white men, but had never before seen a human being with a complexion different from their own. Long schooled to the ways of the savage, Mackenzie did not attempt to push on, but remained to re-assure the natives. The party consisted of three men and three women and seven or eight children, all of whom presented a wretched appearance. They were consoled with beads and other trifles, and feasted upon pemmican. Mackenzie endeavoured to obtain from these people an idea of the country. His inquiries, however, elicited nothing but a confused account of tribes who lived to the westward,





a moon's travel onward, and who extended their journeys to the sea, or, as they expressed it, the "Stinking Lake." The men of tribes were represented as living almost continually in their strongholds from fear of their enemies. These stories did not comfort the explorer; but, persisting in his inquiries, he was rewarded with an account of a large river that ran towards the midday sun, a branch of which had its source not far from the encampment. Three small lakes and as many short carrying places, led to a tributary of the "Great River." This knowledge, imperfect as it was, aroused the liveliest interest. One of the Indians was induced to guide the party to the small lakes, of which they had spoken.

Taking leave of the Indians on June 10th, Mackenzie pushed on until he reached a small lake, which he judged to be the source of the Parsnip River. Upon landing it was discovered that a beaten path of eight hundred and seventeen paces led over a low ridge of land to another small lake. This ridge was termed "the Height of Land." Within a few paces of this spot were the sources of great rivers, the waters of which empty respectively into the Arctic and the Pacific Oceans. Here two sparkling rivulets tumbled down their rocky channels to lose themselves in the lake which is the source of the Parsnip; while two other glacial streams fell from the opposite height into another lake, draining into the Fraser. The party had crossed the divide, and now, for the first time, the canoe floated with the current. Arriving at the portage, another beaten path was found, one hundred and seventy-five paces long. This lake communicated with the third lake of the chain, the outlet of which flows into the North Fork of the Fraser River. Mackenzie called this stream Bad River, because its rapid, shallow and tortuous course was so impeded by fallen trees that it could be navigated only by dint of the greatest exertion. The banks were almost impassable by reason of treacherous swamps and thick woods.

In descending Bad River, the canoe struck in a shallow; Mackenzie instantly leaped out, the men following his example; but, before she could be stopped, the canoe came to deep water, so that all were obliged to re-embark "with the utmost precipitation." "We had hardly regained our situations," records the journal, "when we drove against a rock which shattered the stern of the canoe in such a manner that it held only by the gunwales, so that the steersman could no



longer keep his place. The violence of this stroke drove us to the opposite side of the river, which is but narrow, when the bow met with the same fate as the stern. At this moment the foreman seized on some branches of a small tree in the hope of bringing up the canoe, but such was their elasticity that, in a manner not easily described, he was jerked on shore in an instant, and with a degree of violence that threatened his destruction. But we had no time to turn from our own situation to inquire what had befallen him; for, in a few moments, we came across a cascade which broke several large holes in the bottom of the canoe, and started all the bars, except one behind the scooping seat. If this accident, however, had not happened, the vessel must have been irretrievably upset. The wreck becoming flat on the water, we all jumped out, while the steersman, who had been compelled to abandon his place, and had not recovered from his fright, called out to his companions to save themselves. My peremptory commands superseded the effects of his fear, and they all held fast to the wreck; to which fortunate resolution we owed our safety, as we should otherwise have been dashed against the rocks by the force of the water, or driven over the cascades. In this condition we were forced several hundred yards, and every yard on the verge of destruction; but, at length, we most fortunately arrived in shallow water and a small eddy, where we were enabled to make a stand, from the weight of the canoe resting on the stones, rather than from any exertions of our "exhausted strength."<sup>13</sup>

This passage from Mackenzie's journal graphically illustrates the dangers which beset the track of the explorer in those unknown wilds.

On Monday, June 17th, at eight in the evening, the party reached the bank of the Great River, an event which is recorded in the following words: "At length we enjoyed, after all our toil and anxiety, the inexpressible satisfaction of finding ourselves on the bank of a navigable river, on the west side of the first great range of mountains."<sup>14</sup>

Alexander Mackenzie had discovered the Great River, now known as the Fraser.

The voyage, even to this point, was a memorable undertaking,

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<sup>13</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 218.

<sup>14</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 228.



for Mackenzie had traversed the whole course of the Parsnip River, from its junction with the Findlay to its remotest headwaters, and the most dangerous reaches of the Peace. Keen observer as Mackenzie was, however, he had failed to notice a large stream which flows into the Parsnip. This was the Pack River, which drains McLeod Lake. It appears that the Indians met by Mackenzie in the mountains knew of an easier route to the Fraser River. It followed the Pack River, McLeod Lake, and Crooked River, to Summit Lake, thence by what is now known as Giscome Portage, to the North Fork, some distance below the mouth of the Bad River. Had the explorer followed this route, he might have saved time, although the ascent of the Crooked River, a rapid and shallow stream, might have proved scarcely less difficult than the descent of the Bad River.

On the morning of Monday, June 18th, the little party of adventurers embarked upon the "Great River." The journal records that "the weather was so hazy that we could not see across the river, which is here about two hundred yards wide." A somewhat particular account of the reaches between the mouth of the Bad River and the junction of the north and south branches is given by Mackenzie. The current is described as "very strong but perfectly safe."<sup>15</sup> Yet it was a perilous undertaking, for at times the river rushed tumultuously between high perpendicular walls of rock, or foamed in long cascades; again, the disposition of the natives was unknown and no care or forthought could save the party, if they should be bent upon its destruction.

The exertions of the voyageurs, and the strong tide, lent wings to the little vessel, as she swept down the river. In the course of the day the party reached the "great fork" formed by the confluence of the north and south branches of the Fraser. The north fork has its source in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, not a great distance above the fifty-fourth parallel, while the south branch rises in the same range to the south of the fifty-third parallel, to the eastward of the 119th degree of longitude. Tête Jaune Cache marks the head of navigation on the southern fork, which is the larger branch. Writing a century and a quarter ago, Mackenzie observed that at the confluence of the two branches the channel "is about half a mile in breadth, and assumes the form of a lake." Even in that early day

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<sup>15</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 230.



forest fires seem to have devastated the country-side, for under the date of June 19, (1793) Mackenzie wrote that "clouds of thick smoke rose from the woods, that darkened the atmosphere, accompanied with a strong odor of the gum of the cypress and the spruce fir." The explorer was soon in the neighbourhood of the South Fort George of today, but he failed to discover the Nechaco River, for which he has been called to task by certain writers. This oversight, however, may be explained—the mouth of that stream is screened by low land covered with cotton-wood trees. In descending the Fraser by the east bank, the Nechaco might easily escape notice on a misty morning. The clear water of this beautiful river, however, is most noticeable against the muddy current of the larger stream. Even if the weather were foggy, and the mouth of the Nechaco masked by trees, or veiled in mist, it would seem that an explorer could not have failed to notice that a large body of clear water embouched into the main river at this point. But at high water, the turbid flood of the Fraser may back up the waters of the Nechaco. Be this as it may, Mackenzie missed the Nechaco, and passed the place where South Fort George stands today, remarking of the banks in that neighbourhood that they were "composed of high white cliffs, crowned with pinnacles in grotesque shapes."<sup>16</sup>

It is not always easy to follow the explorer from point to point, because, trained observer as he was, some well-known features of the river failed to attract his attention or at least are not recorded. Nor is it surprising that this should be the case, when it is recalled that Mackenzie often complained of the fog which generally shrouded the river in the early morning. The heavy mists which are characteristic of the Fraser at certain seasons of the year, rendered the navigation of the newly discovered highway a delicate undertaking. Mackenzie was always up betimes. "At three (or some such early hour) we were on the water," is a frequent entry in his journal, and the observation is usually followed by a reference to the heavy pall of mist which hid from view both the channel and the landscape. This difficulty narrowed the field of observation and sufficiently accounts for Mackenzie's failure to portray accurately in every particular the noble stream he discovered and explored. Then, again, it is likely that in the hundred and twenty years which have elapsed

<sup>16</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 233.





since Mackenzie's memorable excursion in 1793, the mighty current of the Fraser has wrought a change in many places. The river today, except where it flows between rock-bound shores, may not present quite the same appearance as it did a century and more ago.

But now and again there is no mistaking the points or places described. Thus it is with the Fort George Canyon, that notable feature of the upper river, of which Mackenzie writes: "In the last course the rocks contracted in such a manner on both sides of the river as to afford the appearance of the upper part of a fall or cataract. Under this apprehension we landed on the left shore, where we found a kind of footpath imperfectly traced, through which we conjectured that the natives occasionally passed with their canoes and baggage. On examining the course of the river, however, there did not appear to be any fall, as we expected; but the rapids were of considerable length and impassable for a light canoe."

The journal continues—"We had therefore no alternative but to widen the road so as to admit the passage of our canoe, which was now carried with great difficulty; as from her frequent repairs, and not always of the usual materials, her weight was such that she cracked and broke on the shoulders of the men who bore her. The labour and fatigue of this undertaking, from eight till twelve, beggars all description, when we at length conquered this afflicting passage of about half a mile, over a rocky and most rugged hill."<sup>17</sup>

A meridional observation taken at this point gave the latitude as  $53^{\circ}42'20''$ . The true latitude of Fort George Canyon is  $53^{\circ}41'30''$ .

The course was continued in a southerly direction for a quarter of a mile to the next carrying place, which was described as "nothing more than a rocky point about twice the length of the canoe." This evidently refers to that bold escarpment of rock at the narrowest part of the Fort George Canyon. "From the extremity of this point," the journal continues, "to the rocky and most perpendicular bank that arose on the opposite shore, is not more than forty or fifty yards. The great body of water, at the same time tumbling in successive cascades along the first carrying-place, rolls through this narrow passage in a very turbid current, and full of whirlpools."

On the banks of the river in this neighbourhood the explorer found "a great plenty of wild onions, which when mixed with our

<sup>17</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, pp. 234-5.



pemmican, was a great improvement of it; though they produced a physical effect on our appetites which was rather inconvenient to the state of our provisions."

Below Fort George Canyon, Mackenzie caught a glimpse of a few natives, who fled at the sight of the strangers. In spite of Mackenzie and Mackay's efforts to overtake them, the Indians made their escape, but not before they had given vent to their feelings by discharging a volley of arrows at the men who had endeavoured to conciliate them. The two interpreters reported that their language was quite unintelligible.

At half past four in the morning of Thursday, June 20th, the journey was continued, but little knowledge of the surrounding country could be gained as "the fog was so thick that we could not see the length of our canoe, which rendered our progress dangerous, as we might have come suddenly upon a cascade or violent rapid."<sup>18</sup> After the sun had dispersed the mist, two red deer, as the furtrader called the elk, were seen on the bank. Both were killed and formed a welcome addition to the larder of the expedition, which was depleted of all but bare necessities.

Of the country between the Fort George and Cottonwood Canyons Mackenzie observed that "here the country changed its appearance; the banks were but of a moderate height, from whence the ground continued gradually rising to a considerable distance, covered with poplars and cypresses, but without any kind of underwood."<sup>19</sup> The country was not so populous, as directly above and below Quesnel. Occasionally signs of the inhabitants were noticed. At one place, probably near the site of an Indian village, which stood on the west bank of the river, not far above the mouth of the Blackwater, a deserted Indian house was discovered. It excited the curiosity of the explorer, who examined it carefully. He remarked that it was "the only Indian habitation of this kind that I had seen on this side of Mechilimakina."

The dwelling was thirty feet long and twenty wide, with three doors, each three feet high by one and one-half in breadth. An ingenious fishtrap, found in the house, is well described by Mackenzie. It was of cylindrical form, fifteen feet long and four and a

<sup>18</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 234.

<sup>19</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 237.



half feet in diameter: "One end was square like the head of a cask, and a conical machine was fixed inwards to the other end, of similar dimensions: at the extremity of which was an opening of about seven inches diameter. This machine was certainly contrived to set in the river, to catch large fish; and very well-adapted to that purpose."<sup>20</sup> To this day fish traps of the kind described are in use on the rivers and streams of the interior.<sup>21</sup>

Near-by the house a tomb was noticed—"It was in an oblong form, covered, and very neatly walled with bark. A pole was fixed near it, to which, at the height of ten or twelve feet, a piece of bark was attached, which was probably a memorial, or symbol of distinction."

The canoe by this time had become so unseaworthy that it was decided to construct another, with as little delay as possible. As from the appearance of the country there was reason to believe that birch bark might be found, a party was landed at eight in the morning to scour the woods for the precious material. Four men were despatched on the mission, and at twelve they returned with enough bark "to make the bottom of a canoe five fathoms in length and four feet and a half in height." At this point Mackenzie took another observation, which marked the position of the expedition as in latitude  $53^{\circ}17'28''$ .<sup>22</sup> Cottonwood Canyon is in latitude  $53^{\circ}08'00''$ , so the party at that time must have been near this dangerous passage.

Mackenzie passed the mouth of the Blackwater on June 20th. This little stream did not escape notice.

Here again the reader of the explorer's journal, who is familiar with the Fraser River above Quesnel, will have no difficulty in recognizing a striking feature of that noble waterway. "Here," says Mackenzie, "the river narrows between steep rocks, and a rapid succeeded, which was so violent that we did not venture to run it. I therefore ordered the loading to be taken out of the canoe, but she was now become so heavy that the men preferred running the rapid to carrying her overland. Though I did not altogether approve of their proposition, I was unwilling to oppose it. Four of them undertook this hazardous expedition, and I hastened to the foot of

<sup>20</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 239.

<sup>21</sup> The author examined one of these fishtraps *in situ* on the Nechaco River in August, 1912.

<sup>22</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 240.



the rapid with great anxiety to await the event, which turned out as I expected. The water was so strong that although they kept clear of the rocks, the canoe filled, and in this state they drove half way down the rapid, but fortunately she did not upset; and having got her into an eddy, they emptied her, and in an half-drowned condition arrived safe on shore."

The carrying place was about half a mile long, and that it was frequently used by the Indians was proved by the fact that there was a well-marked path across it. Both the Fort George and Cottonwood Canyons are often navigated, even in this day, by Indians and white men in the cottonwood dug-out of native design and workmanship; but in both places navigation has been improved by the blasting out of certain rocks that in the old days threatened with destruction the little vessel of the Indian or the furtrader. At high water both canyons are dangerous, and even the hardest voyager might well hesitate before attempting to navigate the turbulent stream that flows between the rock-girt shores of the Fraser at these points. Mackenzie descended the river in flood time and his feat, therefore, is all the more remarkable.

After the passage of the Canyon the canoe was in such wretched condition that it "occasioned a delay of three hours to put her in a condition to proceed." At length, all being in readiness, the course was continued.

Those who know the Upper River will recognize Mackenzie's description of that portion of it "where the ledges of white and red clay appeared like the ruins of ancient castles." This description undoubtedly refers to the strange, castellated formation at the elbow of the river, between the Cottonwood River and the Cottonwood Canyon.

After this day of arduous exertion, the party camped in a storm of rain and thunder, near some old and deserted Indian houses. On the following morning ninety pounds of pemmican were buried in the ground for the homeward journey. "As I was very sensible," Mackenzie remarked on this occasion, of the difficulty of procuring provisions in this country, I thought it prudent to guard against any possibility of distress of that kind on our return; I therefore ordered ninety pounds weight of pemmican to be buried in an hole sufficiently deep to admit of a fire over it without doing any injury to our hidden





treasure, and which would, at the same time, secure it from the natives of the country, or the wild animals of the woods.”<sup>23</sup> It is impossible to say exactly where this cache was made, but it could not have been far from the Cottonwood River.

Not far from the cache, Mackenzie passed the beautiful bench where today stands the flourishing town of Quesnel. Here “a large river flowed in from the left,” which several years later Simon Fraser named Quesnel, in honour of Jules Maurice Quesnel, one of his lieutenants. A little below Quesnel, Mackenzie made an observation, and, according to his reckoning, the point was in latitude  $52^{\circ}47'51$ .” Near this point a small canoe was noticed, at the edge of the woods, and soon another, paddled by a single man, appeared in the stream. At the sight of the large canoe the natives gathered on the bank, armed with spears, bows, and arrows. It was quite apparent that the men were in a state of great apprehension, yet “they displayed the most outrageous antics,” and indicated by their gestures that if the party should land it would be attacked. Mackenzie at once ordered his men to stop the canoe, as he knew that it would be useless to attempt to approach the savages before their fears had in some degree subsided. The interpreters, who fortunately understood the native language, informed Mackenzie that the Indians declared that all would meet with instant death if the canoe approached the shore. Their threat was not an idle boast, for it was followed by a volley of arrows, some of which fell short of the canoe and others passed over it. By this time the current had carried the canoe below, and Mackenzie ordered his men to quietly paddle up the opposite side of the river until he was abreast of the Indians. He was anxious to overcome their antipathy, the more so as he had noticed that a canoe had been despatched down the river, as he concluded to communicate the alarm and procure assistance.

It was in such dramatic moments as these that Mackenzie's determination and knowledge of Indian character proved an unfailing source of strength. Undaunted, he left his canoe and walked towards the group of excited natives, as calmly as if no danger threatened. He took the precaution, however, of sending one of his interpreters into the woods, there to conceal himself where he could command the position with his musket; but the man was particularly

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<sup>23</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. 241.



enjoined not to fire until the explorer gave the signal. Mackenzie walked slowly, displaying as he went, looking-glasses, beads, and other alluring trinkets. This was more than the curiosity of the natives could withstand. They approached the shore, but at first did not venture to land. However, friendly relations were soon established, and with great satisfaction Mackenzie found that his interpreter and these people understood each other perfectly.

The explorer lost no time in seeking information respecting the course of the river. He was informed that it ran for days towards the mid-day sun, and that at its mouth white people were building houses—from which account it would appear that news of the Spanish settlements at Nootka and Neah Bay had reached even the distant territory of the Carriers. "They represented its current," Mackenzie wrote, "to be uniformly strong, and that in three places it was altogether impassable, from the falls and rapids, which poured along between perpendicular rocks that were much higher, and more rugged, than any we had yet seen, and would not admit of any passage over them. But besides the dangers and difficulties of the navigation, they added, that we should have to encounter the inhabitants of the country, who were very numerous. They also represented their immediate neighbours as a very malignant race, who lived in large subterraneous recesses: and when they were made to understand that it was our design to proceed to the sea, they dissuaded us from prosecuting our intention, as we should certainly become a sacrifice to the savage spirit of the natives. These people they described as possessing iron, arms, and utensils, which they procured from their neighbours to the Westward, and were obtained by a commercial progress from people like ourselves, who brought them in great canoes." <sup>24</sup>

This information, alarming as it was, did not affect Mackenzie's determination to reach the coast. Having persuaded two of the tribe to accompany him as guides and to secure a favourable reception from the tribes below, the expedition started once more on its perilous voyage. The "malignant race" who lived in subterraneous recesses, were evidently the Thompson Indians, who dwelt underground in the winter months in their "keekwillee" houses. The territory of

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<sup>24</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, pp. 245-6.  
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this tribe abutted on the Fraser River. In that day there was a very large village at Camchin, now Lytton.

In this region many natives were seen but although they exhibited the utmost surprise at the appearance of white men, and were frequently hostile, they did not attack the party. Nevertheless, on their account, it was necessary to proceed with caution, as it was not known at what point Indians of a more savage disposition might be met.

At one point Mackenzie prevailed upon an old man to sketch the river upon a large piece of bark. Again it was represented as being extremely rapid, with numerous falls and cascades, many of which were dangerous and others altogether impracticable. The carrying places were of great length, passing over rugged hills and mountains. Beyond lay the lands of three tribes speaking different languages. At a great distance, the old chief observed, the river reached the water which the natives did not drink. Another very old man said that as long as he could remember he had heard of white people to the southward, and that, although he could not vouch for the truth of the report, one of them, in an attempt to ascend the river, was destroyed. From what he heard, the explorer concluded, wrongly, as appeared subsequently, that the river did not enter the Ocean to the north of the River of the West, as the Columbia was generally called in the days before it was actually discovered. The natives also told of another route to the sea, and one more easily followed.

At no time, in the whole of his career, did the resolute character of Alexander Mackenzie show to better advantage than on this trying occasion. The mutinous conduct of his men, the hostility of the savages, and the rugged nature of the country, all conspired to prevent his executing his great project. Little wonder is it, then, that his mind became a prey to gloomy thoughts. In spite of the overwhelming difficulties of the situation, however, he did not lose heart, but resolutely set himself to attain his end. The explorer's journal gives a graphic account of the predicament of the expedition at this crisis. "My people," Mackenzie observed, "had listened with great attention to the relation which had been given me, and it seemed to be their opinion, that it would be absolute madness to attempt a passage through so many savage and barbarous nations. My situation may, indeed, be more easily conceived than expressed: I had no more than thirty days provisions remaining, exclusive of such supplies as



I might obtain from the natives, and the toil of our hunters, which, however, was so precarious as to be matter of little dependence; besides, our ammunition would soon be exhausted, particularly our ball, of which we had not more than an hundred and fifty, and about thirty pounds weight of shot, which, indeed, might be converted into bullets, though with great waste.

"The more I heard of the river, the more I was convinced it could not empty itself into the ocean to the North of what is called the River of the West, so that with its windings, the distance must be very great. Such being the discouraging circumstances of my situation, which were now heightened by the discontents of my people, I could not but be alarmed at the idea of attempting to get to the discharge of such a rapid river, especially when I reflected on the tardy progress of my return up it, even if I should meet with no obstruction from the natives; a circumstance not very probable, from the numbers of them which would then be on the river; and whom I could have no opportunity of conciliating in my passage down, for the reasons which have been already mentioned. At all events, I must give up every expectation of returning this season to Athabasca. Such were my reflections at this period; but instead of continuing to indulge them, I determined to proceed with resolution, and set future events at defiance. At the same time I suffered myself to nourish the hope that I might be able to penetrate with more safety, and in a shorter period, to the ocean by the inland, western communication."<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, at a point not far from the place where Alexandria stands today, Mackenzie decided to abandon the river and to continue his journey overland. In order to carry out the new design, it was necessary to return to the mouth of a stream that had been noticed on the north bank—the West Road River of Mackenzie—the Blackwater of today. The men who, but a short time before, had been in a state of open rebellion, now promised to stand by their leader, whatever might be the consequences, and follow him to the ocean. "At all events, I declared, in the most solemn manner," said Mackenzie on this occasion, "that I would not abandon my design of reaching the sea, if I made the attempt alone."

The return of the expedition up the river alarmed the natives, and a general panic seized the men, and again they demanded that the

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<sup>25</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, pp. 255-6.





venture be abandoned and that they should return without delay to the Peace River. But with peremptory words, the explorer silenced their remonstrances.

The canoe, after its long and dangerous passage, had become so unseaworthy that it was determined to build another. Accordingly the party landed on an island not far below the point where the Quesnel River joins the Fraser. An additional supply of bark, watape, and gum were gathered in the woods, and in four days a strong canoe was constructed and ready for service.

The expedition reached the Blackwater River, or as Mackenzie called it, the West Road River, at ten on the morning of Wednesday, July 3, 1793, and proceeded up this stream in search of the Indian who had promised to guide the party overland to the ocean. The native kept his word and, at four in the afternoon, joined Mackenzie, who gave him a jacket, a pair of trousers and a handkerchief, "as a reward for his honourable conduct." On the following day, pemmican, wild rice, Indian corn, gunpowder and a bale of trading articles, were hidden in two caches, and the canoe placed bottom upward on a stage and shielded from the rays of the sun with branches of trees.

The expedition then started on the last stage of its adventurous journey. Each man carried a pack of ninety pounds and Mackenzie and Mackay seventy pounds each, besides their arms and ammunition. Mackenzie also carried his telescope, swung across his shoulders, which proved a troublesome addition to his burden. A native road, in places quite clearly defined, led to the upper reaches of the Blackwater, and thence westerly, through the Chilcotin country, to the Bella Coola River, called by Mackenzie the Salmon River.

It was not until July 17th that the eyes of the explorer were gladdened with the sight of an Indian village. Upon their arrival the chief treated the toil-worn men with every consideration, inviting them to his house, where he regaled them with salmon roe and other native delicacies. This place was on the Bella Coola River. From the natives Mackenzie procured two canoes, in which the party once more embarked. The Indians wielded their paddles so dexterously that Mackenzie was led to observe that he had always imagined Canadians to be the "most expert canoe-men in the world, but they are very inferior to these people," as his crew acknowledged.

Arriving at a larger village, the party was again most hospitably



received and entertained. Here the explorer learned that ten winters before, the chief had sailed towards the mid-day sun with forty of his people, in his great canoe, meeting on the ocean two large ships manned by white men, by whom he was kindly received. Mackenzie thought that these might be the vessels commanded by Captain Cook.

The natives of this region differed greatly from those to the eastward of the Rocky Mountains. The Indians of the great plains lived by hunting, and the bison or buffalo furnished them with the necessities of life, while the natives of the Pacific Coast region looked to the salmon to supply their wants. Their houses were made of thick cedar boards, so neatly joined that at first they seemed of one piece. "They were painted with hieroglyphics," records the journal, "and figures of different animals, and with a degree of correctness that was not to be expected from such an uncultivated people." It was evident that this tribe had traded with maritime adventurers, because wire, copper and trinkets were plentiful; collars of twisted iron, that weighed about twelve pounds, attracted particular attention. No doubt these collars were some of those made by the American, Ingraham, and traded by him with such advantage amongst the tribes of the Queen Charlotte Islands.<sup>26</sup>

At this village another canoe was obtained, and the voyage continued with native guides, who volunteered to accompany the expedition. Mackenzie was now within a short distance of the sea, and on the 19th of July he caught a glimpse of the narrow inlet into which the river emptied. On the following day, at an early hour in the morning, he passed the site of what is now Bella Coola and reached Bentinck Arm. At last Alexander Mackenzie had achieved his ambition. He had travelled from the Atlantic Ocean to the shores of the Pacific, and in so doing had explored a territory never before seen by civilized man.

Mackenzie, however, was not content to reach tidal water; he wished to view the ocean itself. He paddled down the long fiord, and then, taking a northwesterly course, reached the entrance of Cascade Canal. On his way thither, in passing King's Island, he met three canoes, manned by fifteen men, one of whom related that but a few weeks before boats had visited the bay, filled with white men, and that one of these, whom he called "Macubah," had fired on him, and

<sup>26</sup> Vide Ingraham's Journal, Ms. in Archives Department, Victoria.



another, "Bensins," had struck him on the back with the flat of his sword. Perhaps by these names the natives meant Vancouver and Menzies, for but a few weeks earlier the boats of the *Discovery* had explored this inlet, when Point Menzies, King Island, Bentinck Arm, Dean Canal, and Cascade Canal, had received their names. These indignities rankled in the mind of the Indian, who was only too willing to revenge himself upon Mackenzie's party. He became more and more troublesome, even forcing himself into Mackenzie's canoe, vociferously repeating the unpleasant intelligence that he had been ill-treated by white men.

Mackenzie, in order to escape the importunities of the natives, landed at a deserted village. But the party was followed by ten canoes, each containing from three to six men. The Indians informed Mackenzie that he was expected at the village near-by. Suspecting from their behaviour that some hostile design was meditated, the invitation was declined, and presently the natives took their departure, but not before they had succeeded in stealing several articles of value. Having taken possession of a rock which could be easily defended, the men prepared to spend the night. Presently another canoe arrived, manned by several Indians, who brought a sea-otter and a fine goat skin, offering to exchange the former for the explorer's hanger or sword, which offer, as might be supposed, was declined.

With only a fire to cheer them, the men passed the night on the rock, keeping watch by twos for fear that the Indians might take advantage of the darkness to steal upon them. Bright moonlight, however, befriended the party, and the dawn broke without any hostile attempt being made by the inhabitants of the neighbouring village. In the morning the camp was again visited by natives, who did not disguise their hostility. The young Indian guide, the son of the chief of the village on Salmon River, earnestly entreated Mackenzie to depart, as he had heard that a plot was on foot to kill the whole party. In his agitation he foamed at the mouth. The French Canadians, on hearing the news, became panic-stricken, and asked the explorer if it were his determination to remain there to be sacrificed. He replied, as on former occasions, that he would not retreat. But the natives were implacable and his men mutinous, and he was therefore forced to abandon his project and to return to the river he had quitted the day before.



Before leaving, the explorer mixed some vermilion in melted grease and inscribed in large letters on the southeast face of the rock this brief memorial—"Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three."

On that very day—the 22nd day of July, 1793—another great explorer was, comparatively speaking, but a short distance away. The journal of Captain George Vancouver reveals the fact that he was then in the neighbourhood of Point Maskelyne, surveying the channel which leads to Observatory Inlet and Portland Canal. If these two famous explorers, both of whom rendered the Empire signal service, could have met on the Pacific coast, that meeting would indeed have been memorable!

To add to the perplexities and dangers of the situation, the son of the chief of Friendly Village attempted to desert the party. He was promptly seized and forced to return to the shore, for it was thought better to incur his displeasure than to suffer him to expose himself to the ill-will of the natives, or to allow him to return to his father before the party. Mackenzie himself mounted guard over the frightened youth. The prow of the canoe was then headed for the mouth of the Bella Coola River and the homeward journey commenced. But another disappointment was in store for the explorer. The Indians who resided along the stream, instead of extending the hospitable welcome that had been accorded on the downward voyage, now seemed intent upon impeding the progress of the expedition. At the large village near the mouth of the river the natives were so importunate and troublesome that it was called Rascal's Village. The chief of the next village—the "Great Village"—was surly and little inclined to help the wayfarers; but presents of cloth, knives, and other articles, restored his good humour. Leaving the "Great Village," the party proceeded, single file, through the forest, momentarily expecting an attack, as the natives on their departure were excited and apparently resolved upon mischief.

On Friday, the twenty-sixth day of July, Mackenzie reached "Friendly Village." His reception at the place was in marked contrast to that accorded to him below. The chief, Soocomlick, conducted the men to his own house, and entertained them with the "most respectful hospitality." Mackenzie was touched by the kindness of





this untutored savage, and he entered in his journal that "he behaved to us with so much attention and kindness, that I did not withhold anything in my power to give which might afford him satisfaction. I presented him with two yards of blue cloth, an axe, knives, and various other articles."

The explorer then retraced his steps to the Blackwater River, arriving on August 4th at the place where the provisions and canoe had been cached. Everything was found as it had been left. Embarking on the Great River, also called by Mackenzie the "Tacoutche Tesse," as he considered that to be the Indian name of the stream, the expedition in the course of a few days, made Bad River. The Bad River was ascended, the "Height of Land" crossed, and the canoe launched upon the Parsnip. Gliding along with the current of that noble river, Mackenzie travelled in one day a distance which had taken him seven days to traverse on his outward journey. The river everywhere swarmed with beaver and wild fowl. Then descending the Peace River, which is formed by the junction of the Parsnip and Finlay Rivers, the explorer reached the beautiful rolling country which lies immediately to the eastward of the Rocky Mountains.

At length, on Saturday, August 24th, after an absence of three and a half months, Mackenzie reached Fork Fort, where he had spent the preceding winter. This account of the first overland journey to the Pacific may well close with the last entry in the great explorer's journal—"Here my voyages of discovery terminate. Their toils and their dangers, their solitudes and sufferings, have not been exaggerated in my description. On the contrary, in many instances, language has failed me in the attempt to describe them. I received, however, the reward of my labours, for they were crowned with success."

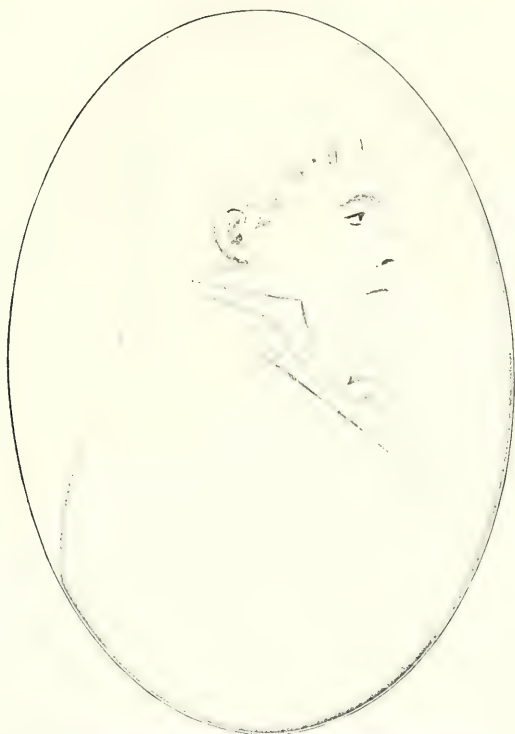
Alexander Mackenzie was the first European to find a pass through the Rocky Mountains; he was the first European to see the noble stream, which, from its source in the heart of that great Cordilleran range, flows into the Gulf of Georgia, after a devious course of some seven hundred miles; he was the first European to embark upon the river which was destined to be named fifteen years later in honour of another explorer, who also owed allegiance to the North West Company; and he was the first European to reach the Pacific Ocean overland. The achievement of Alexander Mac-



kenzie has given him enduring fame. No one explorer, in a few short months, accomplished more than did this imperturbable man, who linked together the known and the unknown—who gave the world its first glimpse of the interior of the Province of British Columbia.

Subsequently Mackenzie appears to have devoted himself to the furtrade and to have amassed considerable wealth. In 1801 he published the narrative of his explorations so frequently quoted in these pages. On February 10, 1802, Alexander Mackenzie was knighted by King George III., in recognition of his services in the cause of geographical science. In 1812 he married a Miss Mackenzie and settled at Avoch in Ross-shire. The great explorer died at Mulnain, near Dunkeld, March 11, 1820, after a long and honourable career.





**SIMON FRASER OF THE NORTH-WEST COMPANY**  
**Explored Fraser river, Ft. George to mouth of North Arm, 1808**



## CHAPTER X

SIMON FRASER

In periods like the present, when knowledge of our country is every day extending, even to the most distant parts of the world, it is no easy matter to throw ourselves mentally back into a time in which the territories, now comprised in the Province of British Columbia, first began to assume a definite political form and to arouse the commercial spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race, one of the greatest propelling forces that the world has ever known. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the vast country beyond the Rocky Mountains was a virgin wilderness, as yet almost unknown and unpeopled, except by aboriginal tribes, whose chiefs held undisputed sway in their several jurisdictions. It is true that the western seaboard had been explored and tolerably well surveyed by Briton and Spaniard and its interior pierced by the furtrader; but these efforts had not as yet led to the occupation of the country; nor had any strong movement in that direction taken place. Great Britain, involved in war with France, which had broken out before Vancouver returned to Europe, found her energies and resources taxed to the utmost to continue the struggle against Napoleon; and therefore the settlement of distant lands was, for the time being, beyond the range of practical politics. Spain, now England's ally, had abandoned forever her enterprise in the North Pacific. Russia alone persevered in her efforts to extend her dominions beyond the sea discovered by Vitus Bering.

If the situation in Europe, precluded Great Britain from actively following up the discoveries of Vancouver and the settlement of the Nootka Affair, with a broad policy of expansion in the trans-continental region of the North Pacific, there was nothing to prevent the progress of the ambitious Canadian furtrader towards the western confines of North America, except physical obstacles similar to those which, from his childhood's days, he had been accustomed to face





and surmount. From the ashes of the heated controversies and bitter feuds of the traders, a new power had arisen, and one which was destined to win before long, signal triumphs in the west. The merging of the rival interests into the great North West Company, a purely Canadian organization, financed by the merchant princes of Montreal, marked an epoch in the history of the furtrade and of this land. Yet that coalition did not, as was fondly hoped, establish peace in the Indian territories. The Hudson's Bay Company looked with sullen eye upon the new association, and then, awaking to a realization of all that the movement portended to its own interests, prepared to follow the daring Nor'Westers into the wilds, and for the conflict that must inevitably ensue this reversal of its time-honoured policy. Then followed that disastrous war, for it was no less, between these two powerful organizations, which did not cease until their amalgamation in 1821, and from which sprang the invasion of the territory beyond the Rocky Mountains; or at least this conflict was one of the chief causes contributing to that movement.

It is by no means easy to decide exactly to what extent the two companies were responsible for the initiation of the explorations that had such far reaching consequences. It is likely enough that their zealous officers in the field had as much to do with the promotion of such enterprises, as the directors in London and Montreal. It may be safely assumed, however, that the men at the head of affairs desired to aid discovery and exploration, if for no other reason than that by so doing new and rich territories might be added to their respective spheres of influence. But trade was the grand objective. This was only natural. After all, the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies were commercial bodies, and dividends were their first concern. Yet, whatever may have been the mainspring of their actions, the fact remains that officers of both companies carried the British flag to the remotest corners of the northern part of the continent. And further, it is clear that had it not been for this agency, the British possessions in North America would not be so extensive as they are today. However, it should never be forgotten that it was the strong arm of England that held what the furtraders had won.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie's wonderful feat did not lead immediately to the occupation of the territory he had discovered. On the contrary, twelve years intervened between the time the land had



been spied out and that at which the "Lords of the Lakes and Forests" went out to possess it. This delay is inexplicable except by reference to the internal history of the North West Company. It has been already indicated that the houses of Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher and of Simon McTavish supplied the requisite cash and credit. The latter person soon dominated its councils and "Le Premier," or "Le Marquis," as he was called, became a veritable storm centre. In 1795, some of those who could no longer brook his overbearing conduct withdrew and joined the independent firm, Messrs. Forsyth, Richardson and Company. Mackenzie was induced at this time, much against his will to remain with the Nor'Westers.

A rivalry sprang up immediately between the two companies—a rivalry the more keen from mere kinship. The struggle between the two older companies paled into insignificance in comparison with this paternal feud. The new company was known for a time as the "New North West Company"; but, seeing the bales of trading goods belonging to their opponents marked "N. W.," they by a happy thought, fixed upon the subsequent letters X Y for themselves. These algebraic letters, signifying unknown quantities, were most apt, as there is little doubt that some members of the North West Company were really interested in this opposition, which was sneeringly called the "Little Company" or in French "La Petite Compagnie," shortened to "Les Petits," and anglicized into the "Potties."

By degrees the breach between Mackenzie and McTavish widened. As Masson has expressed it: "Ces trois années furent une suite non interrompue d'ennuis, de froissement et de mécontentement entre lui, le plus populaire, le plus actif des Bourgeois, et M. Simon McTavish, le chef de la Compagnie et le plus puissant des agents." At the meeting at Grand Portage in 1799 Mackenzie informed the other partners that he had resolved to withdraw. Every effort to alter his determination was in vain; in vain the wintering partners declared their confidence in him and begged his reconsideration. Mackenzie was inexorable. He understood too well that he could no longer continue as the agent and associate of McTavish.

After a short residence in England, during which he prepared for publication the "round unvarnished tale" of his voyages, Mackenzie, having received knighthood, returned to Canada and entered with all his vigour into the work of the X Y Company, which soon became



known as "Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Company." Keener, now, became the rivalry, bitterer the competition, more heated the struggle between the Canadian concerns. Cheating, robberies, free fights, the unstinted use of liquor, every device that could be conceived to gain an advantage—all these things mar this chapter of the furtrade. Yet the energy of the North West Company at the very climax of this struggle in opening fishing stations along the St. Lawrence and in fitting out vessels for trade into Hudson's Bay itself, must give cause for wonder and admiration. Just at this time, in July, 1804, Simon McTavish died. All difficulties vanished. The warring factions drew together, and in a short time were amalgamated, retaining the old name. The North West Company thus became for the first time a real unity, free from internal dissensions, prepared to do better with its competitors alike "beyond remotest smoke of hunter's camp" as in the marts of the world, and thus to stand, proudly claiming to be the most vigorous and successful trading concern operating in North America.

And thus it came about that another was to complete the work of our first explorer—Mackenzie had spied out the land, Fraser would possess it.

While the furtraders were fighting over the division of the spoils in the Indian territories of the north, the government at Washington was not blind to the advantages that would necessarily follow the westward expansion of the United States. President Jefferson, having purchased Louisiana from Napoleon in 1803, desired to extend the limits of his country to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Indeed the plan was forming itself in his mind even before that purchase was completed. As yet there had been no national movement towards that goal, that is to say, the people themselves evinced no interest in the trans-cordilleran region; nevertheless, the President was astute enough to realize that it would not be safe to defer fortifying the position of the United States in the far west. He therefore conceived the project of despatching an expedition under the auspices of his government to cross the Rocky Mountains and to follow the Columbia River from its head waters to its estuary, found by Captain Gray of the *Columbia* in 1792. But, as the route of the expedition lay in part through territories not yet directly assigned to any power, it was necessary to proceed with caution, so as not to excite



the fears or jealousies of other nations. The President therefore gave out that the expedition was purely scientific in its scope, and on that account it aroused no suspicion amongst the ambassadors accredited to Washington. In spite of these precautions, however, the project was nearly killed by Congress refusing to vote the small appropriation—\$2,500—required to give effect to the President's proposal. To the average senator and representative it appeared ridiculous that money should be spent in such a manner. But Jefferson, intent on creating an empire, was not to be thwarted. He submitted to Congress a secret message, in which he intimated that his real reason for advocating the despatch of the expedition, was that it might be ascertained whether or not it would be desirable to annex the land west of the Rocky Mountains. The plea was successful and the appropriation passed. In 1804, Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark began their memorable journey across the continent.

That expedition did not escape the observation of the vigilant partners of the North West Company, nor did it frighten them. If anything it incited them to give immediate effect to the long cherished plan to extend their chain of posts clear across the continent. Greenhow states that it was the expedition of Lewis and Clark that prompted the North West Company to annex the territory beyond the Rocky Mountains; on the other hand Bancroft asserts that there is no proof of Greenhow's explicit statement that it was the immediate object of the North West Company "to anticipate the Americans in the settlement of that portion of the Continent." At any rate, it was this time that the association undertook to occupy the country beyond the Rockies. The decision was reached early in 1805 in the council hall of the North West Company at Fort William, on Thunder Bay of Lake Superior—famous in literature from Washington Irving's admirable description of the feudal glory of the wassailing Nor'Wester. A young man, then only twenty-five years old and a bourgeois, or partner, of but three years' standing, Simon Fraser, was chosen to conduct the perilous enterprise.

Simon Fraser came of good stock. His grandfather was William Fraser of Culbochie or Kilbockie, and his grandmother, Margaret Macdonell of Glengarry. William Fraser had nine sons, six of whom wore His Majesty's military uniform. Of two others





William, the eldest, succeeded to his father's estates, and Simon the second, emigrated to America with his wife, settling near Bennington, in Vermont. This was in 1773, when the Colonies were already in a state of ferment and incipient rebellion. Here Simon, the explorer, was born in 1776. When the Revolutionary War broke out, Simon Fraser, the elder, espoused the Loyalists' cause, joined the loyal forces, and being captured, probably at the Battle of Bennington, he was thrown into prison, where according to one authority, he contracted a fever from which he died shortly after his release. It is said that Simon Fraser, the explorer, states in a diary, a fragment of which has been preserved, that his father died on board a vessel, which carried away the captured army, presumably of General Burgoyne. The accounts are conflicting and the end of the unfortunate father of the hero of this sketch is veiled in obscurity. He left his wife with nine children, four boys and five girls, to fight their own way in the world. After the declaration of peace, the widow, at that time in very straitened circumstances, moved to Canada, eventually settling at St. Andrews near the Ottawa River. It is not so specifically recorded, but it is not unlikely, that Mrs. Fraser and her young family came with the United Empire Loyalists, whose exodus gave bone and sinew to the British colonies of Upper and Lower Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

The Ottawa was the broad highway of the furtraders who passed to and from that great mysterious land which lay towards the setting sun. Here, no doubt, the lad Simon often watched the gay brigades of birch-bark canoes, with their dare-devil crews of French Canadians, as they swept up or down the river; and often listened to the rhythmic *chansons* of the light-hearted voyageurs, as they plied their glistening paddles. It is reasonable to suppose that these sights and sounds, did not fail to stir the heart of the boy, and to appeal to his Gaelic imagination. Thus in his youth, did he, in all probability become familiar with the incidents of the furtrader's life, and boyishly longed to take part in the exploits of the daring men who were then subjugating the wilderness. However this may be, after a term of schooling at Montreal, in 1792, at the age of sixteen, he became an articled clerk of the North West Company, possibly through the influence of his uncle John, who, after serving in Wolfe's army at the capture of Quebec, settled in Canada, and there attained



some eminence as one of the King's judges. It appears that the youth soon won his spurs, for in 1802 he became a bourgeois, or partner—a distinction only conferred upon men who had proved their worth in the field of enterprise. All the servants of the Company aspired to this distinction, and it was the hope of attaining it that wedded men to the North West Company, and its interests. The generous conduct of that association towards its officers and employees was repaid a thousandfold in devoted services and splendid loyalty. It was the unity of purpose and identity of interests established by this bold and generous policy, that gave the North West Company such tremendous force, and that enabled it to carry out so successfully its vast undertaking.

In August, 1805, Simon Fraser left Fort William and, following the usual route of the furtrade, he arrived at a point on Peace River, which he named Rocky Mountain Portage, at the eastern end of which he established a rude post named Rocky Mountain House—not far from the Hudson's Hope of modern maps. He had determined to follow Mackenzie's track through the Peace River Pass, to the country abounding in beaver beyond. In the autumn of the year, having established his base at Rocky Mountain Portage, he ascended the Peace and Parsnip Rivers to the point where the Pack River empties its waters into the latter. This river was not seen by Mackenzie in 1793; or if so, his journal does not record the fact. Simon Fraser followed the Pack to McLeod Lake, or as it was then called, Trout Lake, where he established the first post ever built in the territory west of the Rocky Mountains. This fort now known as Fort McLeod, was then sometimes called La Malice Fort. The building of this fort and Fraser's subsequent work makes the American cry of 1844—"Fifty-four forty or fight"—ridiculous in the extreme. It should be mentioned that McLeod Lake had been discovered earlier in the year by James McDougall, who had thence proceeded westward to Carrier Lake, or Lac Porteur. Leaving in charge of the new station a French Canadian, La Malice (fittingly so named from all accounts), Fraser returned to Rocky Mountain House, where he wintered in company with John Stuart, his able lieutenant and warm friend. Stuart was one of that noble Scots band which made history for us, as their forbears had made on the continent a century before. Fraser's connection with our history was meteoric; Stuart's, though



not so prominent, was of much longer duration. In his younger days John Stuart had been in the Royal Engineers. He appears to have been connected with the North West Company as early as 1799. For fifteen years thereafter he was connected with the operations of that Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, west of the Rockies. Not the least interesting fact concerning this man who so earnestly supported Fraser in his work of exploration and took such an outstanding place in the later development of New Caledonia is that he was an uncle of the late Lord Strathcona.

The journals of the two pioneers, accurately portray the hardships and privations suffered by them and their men in the winter of 1805-1806. For provisions, they were almost entirely dependent upon the resources of the country,—if the chase or the fishery failed, they were brought face to face with starvation. But it is not necessary to dilate upon their situation, which was taken as a matter of course by the men who faced it. The historian, in passing, can only marvel at their intrepidity and resourcefulness in times of danger and starvation.

In the following spring, Fraser prepared in earnest for a more extensive exploration. In May he gathered his small force together. First, he re-visited Fort McLeod which, during the previous winter, had been deserted by La Malice, just as James McDougall was at hand with succour. Leaving there the supplies he had brought for the post, he descended the Pack, and proceeded on his journey up the Parsnip, until he reached the Height of Land which divides the waters that flow into the Arctic Ocean from those that flow into the Pacific. Then, having crossed the portages and lakes discovered by Mackenzie, he embarked upon the Bad River. Following the tortuous and impeded course of that rapid stream, he reached, on July 10, 1806, the "Great River," called by the natives "Tacoutche Tesse." This was no other than the north fork of the Fraser River, but by both Mackenzie and Fraser it was thought to be the Columbia, or one of its chief tributaries. Launching his frail vessels, Simon Fraser voyaged with the stream to the mouth of the Nechaco, also missed or at least not mentioned, by Mackenzie, and ascended it to its confluence with the river that drains Stuart Lake. Here, the explorer met for the first time, men of the Carrier nation.

For a full account of the voyage up to this point one must turn



to the explorer's journal, a few quotations from which will serve to remind the present day and generation of the hardships endured and the difficulties overcome by the founders of New Caledonia. Only a fragment of that document is available: but that fragment is doubly precious since it contains much that is of interest touching the *lares et penates* of the wily natives, the geographical and physical aspect of the country as well as something of the furred denizens of the wild and the strenuous incidents of the daily march. Nor does Simon Fraser forget amid his cares and preoccupations to relieve the latent fires of his soul by a fling at Sir Alexander Mackenzie, as the following entries will show. Here for instance is a graphic description of a native hunting scene written under the date of Monday, May 26, 1806—"Previous to our arrival at the Indians we were greatly amused looking at some of them running after the wild sheep which they call *As-páh*. They were really expert indeed, running full speed among the perpendicular rocks which had not I ocular demonstration I could never believe to have been attained by any creature either of the human or brute creation; for the rocks appear to us, which perhaps might be exaggerated a little, from the distance to be as steep as a wall, and yet while in pursuit of the sheep they bounded from one to another with the swiftness of a Roe, and at last killed two in their snares, one of which we traded for ammunition merely for a rarity. They have great resemblance to the European sheep, the wool is almost as fine, perfectly white, and upwards of six inches long, and when fat the Indians represent the flesh as excellent eating, at present as it is meagre, it is rather tough, and has a strong musk taste and smell."

This is followed by another anecdote which shows very clearly the imminence of the danger, which, like the fabled sword of Damocles, perpetually shadowed the hardy wayfarers in one or another form—flood, famine, or misfortune, or all combined—and in view of which the guerdon of their quest might by comparison seem sometimes inadequate in degree, were it not for considerations on a higher plane than mere commercial interest—the great scientific and political interest to wit, which lay hidden behind these deeds and endeavours:

"Tuesday, 27th. Fine warm weather, the water rises very fast. Indeed it has risen upwards of three feet since we left the Portage,





and though the current is amazing strong it is exceedingly good going as yet. We came to and encamped at the last Rapid which is about two miles below the Fork's on Finlay's branch. La Malice who was before us attempted to ascend this rapid with the pole, but Mr. Stuart who was the nearest to him called to him to desist and I gave him a great set down for risking the property so much where it was unnecessary. It was really difficult to come up this rapid and we were obliged to take out the load and carry it over a rocky point of 400 yards, and the canoes were taken up light. Had the water been lower we could have gone up easily loaded, and had it been higher we could effect the same thing by a safe passage along the right shore that at present contains only water enough to take up the canoes light. La Malice who was first up left his canoe with only the bow of it on the shore and while he was busy at the lower end it went off and ran down the Rapid, it received, however, no injury and they went for it with another canoe. I was much displeased with La Malice on this occasion and as well as his attempting to go up with a full load and threatened him severely if he was not more careful in the future. It was after dark before everything was carried to the upper end of the Portage; of course the canoes could not be gummed which will make us go off late tomorrow."

Then follows a description of the Pack River, which is here referred to as "Trout Lake." The gentle flow of caustic satire at the expense of Sir Alexander Mackenzie adds a certain zest to this passage. "Thursday, 5th June. Trout Lake is a considerable large and navigable River in all seasons. It does not appear to have been noticed by Sir A. M. K. as he used to indulge himself sometimes with a little sleep. Likely he did not see it and I can account for many other omissions in no other manner than his being asleep at the time he pretends to have been very exact; but was I qualified to make observations and inclined to find fault with him, I could prove that he seldom or ever paid the attention he pretends to have done, and that many of his remarks were not made by himself but communicated by his men. It is certainly difficult to stem the current of the east branch during the high water, but not near so much as he makes it. There is scarcely a point in it but a canoe with six paddles would go up with ease."



The next excerpt treats of the arrival at Trout Lake, the neighbouring Carp Lake and the fish obtainable there.

"Saturday, 7th June. We arrived at the house between 10 and 11 A. M. Mr. McDougall has been anxiously waiting for us these several days. He informed us that several of the Carriers are daily expected here, and that all the Indians of this place are at the Carp Lake where there are immense numbers of fish of the Carp Kind and that there is no fish caught in this Lake excepting a very few carp on account of the water being too high, notwithstanding which we are determined to feed all hands with fish while we remain here making canoes, and for that purpose began immediately to prepare nets. Mr. Stuart being the most expert hand mending, he mended them all and Saucier and the others set six and the Indians set some also."

Not the least of Simon Fraser's difficulties arose from a recurrence of sickness among his men.

"We are really ill of," he writes on Saturday, 28th June, "in regard to the men, Saucier is sick, Gagnon complains of his side, Blais of having a pain and a lump upon his stomach, Gervais is not well and La Londe is not able to steer his canoe."

La Malice also seems to have caused a great deal of trouble—witness the entry of July the first:

"La Malice walked over both the Portages though we offered to carry him; he is very troublesome in his sickness and called Mr. Stuart to his tent to 'tell him his mind.' He enquired if either of us owed him a grudge. This he asked, he said, because while at the Portage we disregarded him and now considered him no more than a dog. Mr. Stuart told him that if either of us owed him a grudge, or had anything to say to him that we would not wait his being in his present weak condition to do it and that if he had been in better health, since he began the subject himself, he would perhaps tell him his opinion of himself and sickness. This assertion of his (La Malice), is entirely false; we have been attentive and kind to him. Nothing is more certain than that from the time he declared himself sick he was as well attended and taken care of as if it was one of ourselves and, notwithstanding his complaints, he used more than one-half of the medicine (God knows good or bad), we possessed and destroyed more flour and sugar than both of us did since we left the Portage;



and yet he threatens to remain upon the beach and not embark, alleging that by agreement he is not obliged to voyage in this part of the country and (is) not well taken care of. When we prepared to leave him here with a bag of Pemmican, exclusive of the other provisions we had, and a man to conduct him down to Trout Lake, not one of them would consent to remain unless absolutely compelled and, as he is brutish and appears as if inclined to commit suicide, we did not think it right to compel a man to remain with him, so we will be obliged to take him with us, and attend to him the best way we can; and yet, I must own that he is not very deserving, but it is a duty incumbent on one Christian to help another in distress and we will continue to take care of him, more for our own sake than his."

At this point an event of some importance is noted which, from the nature of the same, deserves a special prominence; and indeed one can well understand and almost re-echo the note of satisfaction which rings in the record when, on July the 10th, Simon Fraser beheld the Large River—the Fraser. "At 10 A. M.," writes the explorer, "we arrived at the Large River opposite an Island without encountering any other difficulty than cutting several trees that laid across the channel and we were most happy at having exempted the long and bad carrying place and seeing ourselves once more on the banks of a fine and navigable river." Fraser goes on to observe: "This is a fine river and not unlike the Athabaska, but not so large and the Indian we left at the height or point of land informed us that the upper end of it was the most ordinary residence of the *Saya-Thau-Dennehs* (Baucanne Indians), which corroborates what the Carriers tell us of these Indians as to their being enemies when they go a hunting in that quarter. I have seen one that was wounded last summer; and his brother was killed, which is likely the same that was mentioned by one of the Baucanne Indians last winter at Dunvegan as having been killed there. All accounts agree that large animals as well as those of the fur kind are in great abundance, particularly towards the upper end. Could this be relied upon and that the Baucanne Indians are really thereabouts, an establishment in my opinion would be well placed at the point of land. There is excellent fish in the three Lakes and in two of them Salmon abounds in its season and by all accounts animals are not far off; indeed of this we had ocular demonstration ourselves, so that people would live well



there—a no immaterial object in this quarter—and the Baucanne Indians would be much more easily got to come there than to any part of the Peace River, on account of their being afraid of the Beaver Indians, and the Big Men, though they seldom meet they live in amity.”

The preceding entry is followed by a graphic description of the Bad River together with a just tribute to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who gave it its appropriate name:

“Sir A. M. K. seems to have examined the bad river with attention, for, as far as he went down the Peace he describes it with great exactness. It is certainly well named and a most dangerous place, being much intersected with large stones, fallen trees and *embaras*, and the current run with such velocity that a canoe, though light, cannot be stopped with poles and it is with great difficulty it can be done by laying hold of the branches, and even that way we often drifted 100 and sometimes 200 yards from the time we began to hold the branches before we could bring to. Near its confluence it divides into three branches, all of which I suppose to be navigable, but the one to the right is the best route. We were anxiously looking for cedar and maple along the banks of the river but to no effect, I walked myself except in very few places from one end to the other, but saw no appearance of either, neither did any of the others.”

The succeeding extract refers to the South Fork, missed or at any rate not recorded by Mackenzie, at whom Simon Fraser has here another tilt on account of the importance of the omission:

“Friday, July 11th. Fine weather. We set off early and came on with great expedition and before we entered the great Fork passed several Rapids, but the current is slack in many places. The banks of the River are well stocked with wood and we saw Hemlock and cedar of a large size with some small plum. At sunset we got to the River. This River is not mentioned by Sir A. M. K. which surprises me not a little, it being full in sight and a fine large River and, in the state we saw it, equal in size to that of the Athabaska River and forms what Mr. McDougall in his journal of last spring calls the great Fork. It flows in from the right, and as far as I can judge about 10 or 12 miles above the first Portage. Sir A. M. K. appears to have been very inaccurate in the courses or there must have been a vast difference in the compass he made use of and the one we had which is old





and perhaps not very good. As for the distances I say nothing; it is difficult to determine by sight; but the course of the River is different and ought to agree, at least the distance that leads to the Carriers Lake where Mr. McDougall was last spring. And then formed our encampment on a sandy bank with no wood which, with the rain that fell towards the night and continued until the morning, rendered our situation not very pleasant. Mr. Stuart took the course of the River and made minute remarks on everything."

Simon Fraser thus refers to the Nechaco River:

"Sunday, July 13th. The banks of the river are beautiful, in many places resembling that of the River Lac La Pluie, and the *Liard* is the most stupendous I ever saw, as for any other wood or anything else remarkable we saw none that is not clearly mentioned."

By no means the least dangerous of the perils of the way arose in the shape of grizzly bears, which abounded in the Nechaco country, then, as now, as the following episode shows:

"Sunday, July 13th. About 4 P. M., as we were advancing inside of an Island we saw two cubs in a tree and immediately pulled ashore to fire upon them, but, before we could get to them they were off and La Garde and (Barbueller) who were the first on shore pursued them. The latter soon met the mother and fired upon her to no effect and she pursued him in her turn, but he, being near the water, jumped in and she after him, but soon left him and, as La Garde was advancing, another bear suddenly rushed upon him and tore him in a shocking manner. Had not the dogs passed there at that critical moment he would have been torn to pieces. The Bear left him to defend herself against the dogs and, during the interval, he ran off and jumped into the River and from thence it was with much difficulty he could walk to the canoe. He received nine or ten bad wounds and we encamped early to dress them. We are really unfortunate in regard to the men. One of the canoes will now be obliged to continue with three and no great help can be expected."

This, the last of these extracts, again illustrates in a forcible manner the many difficulties of that eventful journey:

"Friday, July 18th. Early in the morning the men cut a road of 300 yards in length, wide enough to carry the canoes which they brought, with all the baggage to the upper end. From thence they set off with only one canoe, on account of the current being strong



and several Rapids to pass which they could not ascend with less than six men, and continued for a mile and a half. In the above distance they carried the canoe and loading, over a point of about twice the length of the canoe, and, from the upper end of the Rapid, returned for the other canoe, which was effected at 1 P. M. From thence we continued up a strong and constant current where we made a small Portage and soon got to a high point of perpendicular rock where we had much trouble to pass and fix lines. Here all hands, excepting one man who was taking care of the other, were put to one canoe, but, as they were hauling it up the last cascade, it wheeled round and the foreman was obliged to cut the line and they went down to the foot of the Rapid before they could bring to. As this happened through the awkwardness of the people, I made them unload everything and bring it up a very steep hill rather than risk anything in the canoe. We made a pretty long portage rather than risk anything in the canoe. We encamped upon a beautiful hill, the canoes were left on the water all tied, it being too late to take them up the rapid and impossible to take them up the hill on account of the steepness. The Indians are ahead, but about sun-set the Montaigne de Butte came before us to get provisions for himself and family. Instead of feeding us, we have been obliged to provide for them; and as yet they have been of no manner of use to us and I am almost sorry for taking them."

The expedition then ascended Stuart River and on July 26th entered the Lake Na'kal of the Indians, named Stuart Lake by Fraser, in honour of his friend and companion John Stuart. Unfortunately the explorer's journal ends abruptly on July 18, 1806, and it is therefore impossible to give from Fraser's own words an account of the passage up Stuart River. Although the explorer's report is wanting, the painstaking and Reverend A. G. Morice, O. M. I., in his valuable work entitled "History of the Northwest Interior of British Columbia," has been able to supply the missing links in the chain of history. He has gathered together the traditions of the natives and examined with care the journals and letters of old Fort St. James, and, as a result of his labours, he presents a fascinating account of the reception accorded the discoverers by Chief Kwah's people who dwelt at the outlet of the lake. James McDougall, in the course of the excursion previously referred to, had visited this



sheet of water, and, having met the Indians of the neighbourhood, he presented to one of them a piece of red cloth as a token of friendship. When the natives beheld the canoes of the traders sweep down the lake, this man, donning his red cloth badge, fearlessly paddled forth to meet them, much to the dismay of his fellow tribesmen, who feared for his safety. Toeyen, for such was his name, was welcomed by Fraser, and given a seat in one of his canoes. As the explorers approached the shore, the Indian spoke to his people, assuring them that the strangers had come as friends. The Carriers, who had in the meantime, prepared to repel by force this invasion of their lands, being thus reassured, permitted the white men to disembark. Fraser, long accustomed to dealing with savages, adroitly won their confidence by the distribution of largesse, in the form of tobacco and soap. The former was tasted and thrown away, but the women promptly proceeded to eat the latter, mistaking it for fat, when to their astonishment the substance turned to foam in their mouths. Still more were the natives surprised when the voyageurs lit their pipes, and puffed smoke from their mouths. The strangers were taken for spirits in whom their crematory fires yet burned, not an altogether unnatural conclusion, seeing that these people burned their dead. These strange happenings, Father Morice records, filled the Indians with awe, but when the use of the different articles had been explained to them, their fear gave way to admiration. It will be seen presently how they impressed Simon Fraser.

Without delay, the explorer seized upon the most favourable location for a post, and began to erect buildings a short distance above the outlet of the lake. Thus was founded the celebrated Fort St. James, a place which has figured prominently in the history of New Caledonia, as Fraser christened the new domain of the North West Company.

Unfortunately, at this time the expedition began to run short of supplies; the salmon were late in reaching their spawning grounds and the situation soon became serious. In order to lessen the difficulty of feeding his men, Fraser divided his forces and despatched John Stuart to examine the country to the southwest. Before separating, the explorers agreed to meet later in the season at the confluence of the Stuart and Nechaco Rivers. Meanwhile, Fraser superintended the construction of the new post and explored the



adjacent region, gaining a knowledge of the country, not only by personal surveys, but also by gathering from the Indians all information that might assist him in his work.

In due course Fraser and Stuart met at the appointed rendezvous, the latter bringing with him such a glowing account of the region he had just left, that his superior decided to return thither forthwith to establish yet another trading post. Notwithstanding the lack of supplies and the inadequacy of their force, the heroic men proceeded to the sheet of water named Fraser Lake by John Stuart, after the leader of the expedition. Soon the salmon appeared, and the rivers and lakes yielded such an abundant harvest that the men were soon surfeited with a diet of fish.

Upon the conclusion of these operations, Blais, a voyageur, was placed in charge of the fort on Fraser Lake, and Fraser and his lieutenant retired for the winter to Nakazleh, the earliest name of Fort St. James.

In this wise were the first permanent posts established in the interior, long before the country in which they are situated received its present name, and long before any permanent settlements were formed on the coast. The Spanish settlement at Nootka, formed in 1789, was abandoned five years later. Nor were the efforts of the maritime furtraders, John Meares and John Kendrick, to establish posts more successful. Because the settlements on the coast, although not founded until a later period, grew more vigorously, and soon became important, their rise and progress have overshadowed these humble beginnings in the central interior in the early years of the nineteenth century. Yet it remains that the first British posts were established, not on the coast but in the interior, a fact that has been often overlooked. Humble as these beginnings were, they mark an epoch in our history, and Simon Fraser is justly entitled to the honour of being reckoned as one of the founders of British Columbia.

Fraser, it appears, did not stay at one place in his first winter in the new country. From the few surviving letters and diaries of that interesting period it is known that sometimes he was at "Nakasleh" (Fort St. James), and sometimes at "Natleh" (Fort Fraser). Not many of the explorer's letters have escaped the ravages of time, but the historian is fortunate in having access to a few blurred





pages written by him in New Caledonia. Perhaps these letters are not written in polished English; perhaps they exhibit more concern with the petty details of the furtrade than with stirring incidents; yet they are of surpassing interest, because they throw light upon that early formative period, and give reality to scenes and operations that have long been forgotten. In these letters, the explorer tells, in his own matter of fact words, the story of his hardships and privations, and explains the difficulties of his administration. He himself was not deceived as to their literary merit. Referring to one of them he says—"It is exceeding ill wrote, worse worded and not well spelt."

Just before Christmas, Fraser was at "Nakasleh," and on the 21st of the month, he writes to James McDougall, then in charge of the post at McLeod Lake:

"21st Dec. 1806.

"Nakazleh.

"Mr. James McDougall,

"I received yours of 30 of October on the 12th inst. at Natleh, and I arrived here on the 18th. Had it not been for the disappointment of the conveyance of letters, on account of the quantity of snow in the mountains, you would have received the news from us long before now. I certainly was highly disappointed and vexed that no canoes arrived to this quarter which is a considerable loss to the Company, and a severe blow to our discoveries. This is the first opportunity I had of sending you a man and powder but with this you will receive St. Pierre and 3 quarts of good powder. I think that it would be a very good plan to go inland to make the Indians work but then you cannot leave the house without some person to take care of it on account of the property. In regard to the Indians, settle with them according to your own best judgment. I have not the least doubt but what you will exert yourself to make them work Beaver until the beginning of February and after that to employ the best hunters to make provision. I am thoroughly convinced that your returns will fall far short of your expectations but that is a misfortune that cannot be helped, but then I intreat you to be particular in making the Indians dress their furs properly. The Little Head's br. in Law arrived at Natleh on the 12th conducted



by two men. I don't know as yet whether he will be of any service or not—the Montaigne de Butte behaves well with Mr. Stuart. Two men that Mr. S. sent to Forests for fish brought the news that three of the Big men were arrived there. Send back Gervis immediately with the news as we intend to send the news after his return to the Peace River. Should an opportunity offer forward the General letter to the P. River. Kunchuyse promises to be back in 6 nights. Should you see any Possibility of getting any goods brought up in course of the Summer, please write accordingly. Having nothing more to say upon this subject I must here wish you Joy, as I understand that you have entered upon the matrimonial state. I am Glad to hear that the children are well taken care of. I assure you that I am nowise concerned about them as they are under your Protection, the only thing I fear is that you are starving, but I hope it is the contrary with you, so I conclude my dr James,

“yours sincerely

“SIMON FRASER.”

Again, on the last day of January, 1807, he wrote to James McDougall, this time from Natleh, or Fraser Lake:

“Natleh, 31st Jany 1807.

“My dear McDougall

“Yours I received this afternoon per the two men from your quarter, whom to be sure took much time, this being their fifth day from Nakazleh, indeed they were not in a hurry as they had plenty provisions, one half of 22 salmon ought to have been enough for them as the voyage can easily be performed in 2 days, 3 at most, allowing the road to be bad. Regarding what you say about the woman that Bugné has, I am noways apprehensive that the company can put their resolve in execution—But then it was wrong of you to have given him leave to take her, you knew full well that she was taken from St. Pierre last spring, merely to give up the custom of taking any more women from the Indians, and that he was promised that no other Frenchman would get her. Your commerce between Blais and Lamalice last spring ought to have been a sufficient warning, not to meddle yourself any more about women.—Your conduct at T. Lake is highly blamable and your character as a Trader



much blasted which you can only recover, but by your future assiduity and attention to your business, which I would be most happy at & will befriend you as much as lays in my Power. I am pleased you own your fault and seem sorry for it, & promise to do better for the future. The Company probably will blame us both as they will be highly disappointed in their expectations regarding this Country. We are highly unfortunate—everything has been against us since Last Spring, & nothing was of so much detriment as the Canoes arriving so very late in the fall. We had such a severe spell of bad weather, that is to say it was so very cold for several days after my arrival here that I could not make the Indians of your place set off to return until the 25th, when the first band went away, & Q'ua and Le Gourmand, having been upon a visit to Steela the latter did not come back until of late, but both of them set off yesterday straight across by the winter Road, they said they would have gone round by the way of *Scycup* but that they were too ill Clothed & would starve before they could get to where there are beaver, but they promised me that they will work well until the spring, but I put no faith in what they say.

“Those big men must be severely treated to break them of the Custom of coming to the Carriers. The Poudres band has behaved and worked pretty well. I heard that there were two Indians who never saw the Fort in that band; Mr. Stuart apprehends that Barbue and many others will not go to the Fort until *en canoc*—Maitres will answer as well as codline for a cordeau and Mr. S. can send you plenty hooks. I received the Play Book you sent, which will answer very well with the Plaything I brought before. The Tea Kettle I could have done without. Your Journal of last winter at the Portage & Trout Lake, as well as the one of last summer & this winter, you must get them brought over to copy, which must be sent to the Peace River by next opportunity, which I expect will be in the later end of March, as the Company require it. Saucier and Gagnon are to be the bearers of this, who start tomorrow morning to take each a Load of fish to Mr. Stuarts and in the mean time to get their equipments & they will bring back a load when they return. Those that came from there say that they lost their way in several places. If true those that go there must have a guide, and I have no doubt but what you can secure one of those Beggars that go over from here for that purpose. Expedition is required; the Season is pretty far advanced



and much to be done yet, I send my Journal over to Mr. S. to copy and it must be done in order to send it down by the next opportunity that it may go out to headquarters in the light Canoe. Besides I have another Plan in view, that is if it could be done with ease to get all the goods that will be required for going down the Columbia in the Spring as well as whatever will be necessary for your Post for the Summer Trade, brought over from T. Lake upon the snow, as I fear much time would be lost by going there by the New Road in the Spring. I don't know which would be most advantageous, to get the pieces brought over in the winter, or go for them in the Spring *en canoe*; at all events bark must be had, to make a Canoe at Nakasleh, as I expect Mr. McLeod will send us a canoe maker, & I have been informed that there is plenty good Bark very near your place—which is absolutely necessary you should ascertain as soon as possible. Here we know where there is wherewith to make a Canoe. I cannot think of anything else So I conclude My dear McDougall as usual

“Your well wisher

“SIMON FRASER.”

This letter is of peculiar interest because it vividly portrays the troubles that beset the founders of New Caledonia, and it is important because it shows that Fraser's work in the northern interior, was only preparatory for that which was to follow. His great undertaking was yet before him. The North West Company's occupation of New Caledonia had apparently a twofold object, the annexation of the territory abounding in beaver discovered by Mackenzie and the establishment of a base from which might be conducted the ambitious enterprise of conquering the coast region. The paragraph referring to the writer's determination to trace the course of the Great River, from its head waters to its mouth, clearly shows that Fraser knew very well what was expected of him in that particular. That the furtrader had not confined his attention alone to the river routes of the country, is shown by his reference to the “new road,” which was the trail, just cut, between Nakasleh and Fort McLeod, which, from this record, appears to have been the first highway, if such it may be termed, constructed in the territory west of the Rocky Mountains.





While Fraser was busily engaged in superintending the operations in the new district, John Stuart was not idle. He also moved from post to post. In February, 1807, he was at McLeod or Trout Lake—the “T. Lake” of Fraser. While there he received a letter from his superior, which throws a new light upon the character of Simon Fraser, who held Stuart in high esteem, and therefore writes more openly to him than to James McDougall. Fraser was then at “Natleh,” and, under the date of February 1st, he addressed the following letter to his friend and lieutenant:

“Natleh 1st February 1807.

“My d<sup>r</sup> friend

“Yours of the 12th Jany I received only yesterday, so you see they took much more time than they ought, so I am sure you will be getting out of Patience before you receive this. It is with the greatest pleasure that I always receive letters from you, they contain much useful information & instruction, tho’ the subject of your last cannot be agreeable it is satisfactory, knowing how matters stood at T. Lake upon your arrival there—which you have written in a copious & lively manner; notwithstanding your mind being obscured in thought you wrote with ease.

“I sympathize with you my friend under your Present affliction for the loss of Mr. R. Stuart, your Late Dearest of Brothers, and hope he has only left this world of Trouble and vexation to go to ever-lasting bliss. We cannot shun that Power which Rules our fate; therefore it should be our only consolation to be Prepared for our last and awful end.

“It is a true observation of yours that when the head fails the Body soon goes to wreck, which has been the decay of Trout Lake since last November. That business is so intricate that a person cannot easily see into it. However, it seems that Lamalice had an ascendancy over Mr. McD., but then I am sure that he can change both his ( ) and his manners to the will of his master & his interest. It seems then that the debt he was said to have made at the Portage was only put in effect at Trout Lake, while Mr. McD. was at the Indians.

“I imagine when you take account of the Dry goods that you will find they suffered less or more like the stores. Had Lamalice



behaved honestly he would have come to Nakazleh. It is not a good excuse that he was not ordered. It was our last directions to him when he started from Nakazleh in the summer that he was to come and winter there and if any person along the Road wished to detain him not to mind them unless absolutely kept. Mr. McD. owns that he gave Bugné leave to take the woman that St. Pierre had last winter. This was like the rest of his conduct—he knew full well that she was taken from St. Pierre merely to give up the Custom of taking any more women from the Indians and that St. Pierre was promised that no other Frenchman would get her. I received my order (the coat and Trowsers are amazing large), my Equip<sup>t</sup>. also, which is extremely bad and the Trousers so small that I cannot put them on much less make use of them, and tho' you were pleased to send me your Capot instead of mine it is also too small for me. I own the Eqt. to be (Chilipi), but then I should rather think that it is the fault of those who put it up at L. L. Pluie than the Companies. Upon the note you mention a pair of Corduroy Trousers which I did not receive & received a handk<sup>t</sup>. there is no mention of—I also received the small axes and 10 pounds sugar & some tea, with which I will content myself at present. A good net cannot be had for a small ax. I traded one of small meshes which appears very good for an half ax. I only got 50 salmon for a small axe today. I sent off Saucier and Gagnon with 200 salmon for you & 60 as provisions for themselves, but I am afraid they will take much time to go there on account of the road being stoped or filled up with snow between Nakazleh and your place. All the salmon that is here has been picked and the best sent over before, therefore, I beg of you not to complain of what I send now and indeed to be free with you dont expect you will have occasion to eat sal<sup>n</sup>. yourself. As you are a good Economist you will provide something better and hope your returns will prove better than you expect. The powder and Truisies Lands will give you better than five packs, as I am informed they have made a pretty good hunt. . . . I expect to have the pleasure of seeing you before the embarkation, as you expressed a wish of coming to take the longitude of this Place, & if you can settle your Post in such a manner that it will not suffer by your absence I will expect you by the return of the Express from the Peace River—



"I now inform you of a plan I have in view for the summer expedition which is thus, to get all the goods required at least what he had brought over to Nakazleh as soon as possible upon the Ice by going round by the New Road, when the navigation is open would cause the loss of much time and I expect that the ice will break up in this river nearly a month before the Lakes of the Mountains. Probably a canoe would take more time than we think by that Route and Guides would be wanted as well as a canoe at Trout Lake, but by starting from Nak. the canoes that will be made in this western Division will both answer for going down; but then perhaps the one canoe that would go up would bring everything from Trout Lake to the confluence of this River, where the other canoe and any Provisions that may be Procured in this quarter will be left in cache. I leave it to your Judgment to determine which Plan would be the best. I think to get the goods over immediately would be the most expeditious. 10 pieces goods exclusive of Provisions will answer for going below, viz. 3 Bales,  $\frac{1}{2}$  Bale Kettles,  $\frac{1}{2}$  Case Guns, 1 cassette, 1 case Iron,  $\frac{1}{2}$  Roll Tobacco, 1 Keg Powder, 1 Bag Ball; 1 Bag Shot, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  Keg high wines, and I doubt if this same can be spared. Trout Lake must not be left destitute for the summer and something will be required for Nakazleh. I have not the list of what came there in the fall, nor do I know what is there now, but then if you think this a good Plan you know (what) would be necessary, and that can be spared for the 3 bales and the cassette. The sooner it would be sent over the better before any other work is begun. Besides the above articles a supply will be wanted for Nakazleh, this can be done and to that end every man that can be mustered ought to be sent over with a load—all could be brought over in one Trip each man. Can Provisions be had and what quantity? Perhaps it would be more easy and sure getting Provisions by going there in a Canoe, supposing a few furs would be had at the Lower houses they cannot go out this year. I will send over the few furs that are here immediately with fish to Nak. to be in readiness to send over all the furs that are there and to bring across any goods that we may want. With this I send you over my Journal since the 5th April except from the time we arrived at Nakazleh until the 20th Aug<sup>t</sup> which I expect you will be able to bring up. It is exceeding ill wrote worse worded & not well spelt. But then I know you can make a good Journal of it,



if you expunge some parts and add to others, and make it out in the manner you think most Proper, it will make away with a good deal of your time and Paper but I think it necessary to send it to headquarters in the light Canoe, as it will give our Gentlemen a good deal of information about this Country. You will also receive the two letters you sent me by Blais, I would keep them to copy but I heard you say that you could make up a good Journal from your letters, but then you will send them back in the spring. Your last letter I will copy and send it over another time. With this I enclose what I have of the men's acct<sup>s</sup>.

"Please send over Mr. McD. Journals of last winter at the Portage and Trout Lake &c, of last summer, this winter, to be copied by himself. There are some of them I did not see as yet & it would be necessary for you to look over them and point out anything that is not necessary to be in them. All this will be giving you much trouble and work, but then it will be of service to the Company & some credit to ourselves, to have the Journals in better order; was I possessed of your abilities I would willingly undertake doing all myself. I will send over more of my Journal by next conveyance. I have succeeded in sending back Qua, le Gourmand & several others of the Indians of Nakazleh, and many of the stragglers that were here dispersed as they have ate up all the salmon those of this place had. They now go to trade to Steela, so I apprehend not being able to procure any for the summer—had I men here I would go and trade there also: As I cannot think of any thing more at Present I conclude my Dear Stuart

"Your friend & serv<sup>t</sup>

"whilst

"SIMON FRASER."

"Mr. John Stuart

"P. S. I will be in want of a few small kettles at this place, therefore, you can send one half bale which will serve for both these places—& some Common Cloth & ( ) if any will remain after the men have all their Equipments. We have found Birch here but tho' the bark is not very good we can get enough to make a canoe.

"I will send you herbs by next opportunity. I have none now





Dried but then you ought to have sent me a token of Tobacco first, as for a calumet, you have Power to make one.

"Yours sincerely S. F.

"I will depend upon you for cords to tie our Salmon, Leather Babiche &c.

"if you send people with pieces they will return from Nakazleh. Mr McD hunters do nothing—he had no person to send to the Powders band this Trip. I send over 100 Beaver. It is bad weather continually snowing which will cause the people to take much time to perform any voyage. I am Positively informed that the Nas-cudenees have horses that they got from the East. Many of the Natlians are in mourning for the Deaths of some of their Eminant men. We have had some broils with them—nothing spoils Indians so much as the men having intercourse with them.

"Yours etc. S. F."

On February 10th, 1807, Fraser indites another letter to McDougall, which is noteworthy for its emphatic expression of the writer's opinion of the Indians of the country. It reads:

"Natleh 10th Feby. 1807

"Dr McDougall

"I received your favour yesterday forenoon, and indeed it was high time for the bearers to return their 9th day; the voyage might easily be performed in 5 days. Waka and Minard started in the morning at about a couple hours sun, with a few furs and the other two men will be off in the afternoon with each a load of salmon for the purpose of conducting the furs to Trout Lake as soon as possible, but the people that I send over at present must all return that I may go & trade salmon at Steela, after which they will be employed to convey the furs to Trout Lake. Should any person arrive from M. Stu<sup>a</sup> before that time, you can send them back with a Pack each. Particular care must be taken that the furs be well enveloped & that the rats or mice do not cut them in the store. It is very Proper that the men should be prevented from Trading with the Indians, and dont allow any of them to trade without permission.

"The Gourmand that says that I give the goods for so very little in return, ask him what he got from me. The day before he went



away he asked me for something of every article I was possessed of, but I refused him everything—they are sweet mouths, thieves, lyers and in short have every bad quality; therefore you have no occasion to believe them. It matters very little wheather a person is hated or beloved by them, as they are a lazy set of vagabonds. Qua owes 8 skins from this place, Le Traiteur 3 do, & his Big brother 6 d° & La Vielle Naschoes mother 5½.

“Almost all the Natlians are gone over to Steela to a Grand feast to Burn and ( ) a couple of Chiefs that died of late. When they return from there they will go to the Mountains to kill Carribou. . . . .

“I will expect the men back on the 16th early

“I am D<sup>r</sup> McDougall

“Yours Sincerely

“SIMON FRASER.

“Mr. J. McDougall.”

No apology is offered for presenting these letters, because they recall more vividly than could be done in any other way, the events and happenings that go to make up the earliest history of the northern interior. The writers were far too much engrossed in the work of the hour, to find time to give polished descriptions of events and things which to them were of no great significance. Indeed the fur-traders, with few exceptions, failed to realize that they were making history. Perhaps it is this very unconsciousness, that invests their diaries and letters with such deep interest. They did not write for publication, nor for any other purpose than to give a bare account of their transactions and exploits.

It is evident that Fraser intended to follow the course of the Great River in 1807, but he could not carry out the plans outlined in his letters to James McDougall and John Stuart, as the expected supplies and reinforcements did not arrive in time. The remoteness of the new posts, and the tedious and difficult route by which they were approached, made it no easy task to keep them adequately supplied with merchandise. All the articles required for the trade of the district had to be brought across the continent from Fort William on Lake Superior and nearly a year would be consumed in carrying the articles to their destination. It was quite impossible



to establish new posts, or to explore new territories, without an additional force of men. As a matter of fact, the position of Simon Fraser at this time was one fraught with embarrassment. But in the face of obstacles which would have disheartened a man of less determination, he doggedly persevered. In 1807 he journeyed to and fro in New Caledonia, gathering furs, and establishing friendly relations with the "sweetmouths, thieves, and lyers," as he described the surrounding Indians.

In the autumn of 1807, however, Jules Maurice Quesnel and Hugh Faries arrived with two canoes, laden with supplies. They also carried a despatch from headquarters, instructing Fraser without loss of time to explore the "Great River." With the aid of these reinforcements, the furtrader planted another post, which he called Fort George, at the confluence of the Nechaco and Fraser Rivers. Apparently this fort was built as a base for the expedition which was to descend the river in the following spring, as well as to serve the surrounding district.

It is a fair deduction that the North West Company wished to forestall the Americans on the lower Columbia. Lewis and Clark had completed their memorable journey to the shores of the Pacific, and, after many perilous adventures, had returned to St. Louis in safety. It was this news, no doubt, that induced the North West Company to hurry instructions across the continent to the partner in New Caledonia to act without delay. It should be borne in mind that the "Great River," discovered by Mackenzie, was generally

The news brought by Faries and Quesnel gave a fillip to Fraser's to determine that it was not the Columbia, but another river, which debouched many miles to the northward of Cape Disappointment.

The news brought by Fairies and Quesnel gave a fillip to Fraser's preparations. In May, 1808, he gathered his men at Fort George, whence the little force was to proceed into the unknown territory to the south westward. Fraser of course followed the practice of the furtrader and carefully recorded from day to day the experiences of that memorable excursion and fortunately his diary—or rather a report based upon his diary—has been preserved. Several years ago it was published by the late Senator L. R. Masson in his valuable work "*Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.*" Senator Masson's document is evidently a report prepared after the



return of the explorer—in other words it is a “fair copy” made from the original notes in more than one handwriting. In the Academy of Pacific Coast History of the University of California there is a transcript of part of Fraser’s Journal (covering the period May 30th to June 10th, 1808), which in style corresponds to the letters already quoted. This is seemingly a true copy of the original. In substance these two journals are the same, although in the fragment preserved in the Academy of Pacific Coast History certain particulars as to the courses of the river are given which do not appear in the Masson version. There is no reason to question the authenticity of the Masson document which is one of the cherished possessions of the Toronto Public Library. For the purposes of this narrative the Journal as printed by Masson has been followed, because it covers the whole journey, and because, as already stated, there is no reason to doubt its validity.

Before proceeding with the narrative, it is necessary to allude to a curious thing in connection with the Journal. It commences on Saturday, May 22nd, but the next entry bears the date of Sunday, May 29th. As this is not a misprint, it is hard to account for the days between the 22nd and the 29th of the month. It is certain that from the time of the departure of the expedition from Fort George until May 29th no more than a day’s journey was accomplished. Without further evidence, which is scarcely likely to be forthcoming, it would be useless to attempt to solve the problem.

“Having made every necessary preparation for a long voyage, we embarked at 5 o’clock A. M. in four canoes at Fraser’s River. Our crew consisted of nineteen men, two Indians, Mr. Stuart, Mr. Quesnel, and myself, in all twenty-four.”

This is the simple and unaffected introduction to the narrative of one of the most remarkable of all those heroic enterprises which are the warp and woof of the early history of the western frontier of the North American Continent. Thus was launched the expedition which was destined to accomplish for the Fraser River what Lewis and Clark had accomplished for the Columbia but three years before.

Sweeping down with the current, the canoes passed safely through Fort George Canyon and reached Cottonwood Canyon, where the river contracts into a narrow channel between high rocky banks.





Here, one of the canoes was nearly wrecked. On the second day the explorer reached a beautiful country, of which he observed:—"This scenery has a very fine aspect, consisting of extensive plains, and, behind these, hills rising over hills." And again:—"this country interspersed with meadows, hills, dales, and high rocks, has on the whole a romantic and pleasant appearance." It is not an easy matter to fix upon Fraser's position from day to day, but it is likely that these remarks refer to the country between Quesnel and Alexandria. However, the little vessels, running with the stream, soon reached a region of wild and forbidding grandeur.

The land was populous, for many Indian dwellings and villages were noticed. On Monday, the 30th of May, Fraser landed before a large house, probably in the vicinity of Linden Creek, and here he conversed with the natives, from whom he learned that it would be dangerous to proceed—"before his intention was publicly known throughout the country." He therefore decided to remain at the house for the rest of the day. Mounted couriers were despatched to the tribe below with the news that white strangers were about to pass through their territories. In the course of the day Fraser's journal records, "Tahowtans" and "Atnaughs" rode into the village. "They seemed peacefully inclined, and happy to see us"—"and observed that having heard from their neighbours that white people were to visit their country, had remained to meet us." When asked to describe the river below, they said it was but a succession of falls and cascades, and urged Fraser to discontinue his voyage and to remain with them. Firearms were unknown among these people, and when the voyageurs discharged their muskets they "dropped off their legs with fright." Upon recovering from their surprise they were invited to examine the effect of the shot, and, as Fraser says, they "appeared quite uneasy on seeing the marks on the trees, and observed that the Indians in that quarter were good and peaceable, and would never make use of their arms to annoy white people. Yet, they remarked, we ought to take great care on approaching villages, for should we surprise the natives, they might take us as enemies, and, through fear, attack us."

This sage advice was sedulously followed. Fraser never failed to induce the chiefs of the successive tribes he visited to introduce him to their immediate neighbours beyond.



Day by day, as he proceeded, dangers and difficulties increased. It was frequently necessary to seek information from the Indians respecting the river and now and again a native artist would be asked to sketch its course thence onward to the sea. But invariably Fraser received the same reply, that the river below was a series of unnavigable canyons, flanked on either side by impassable mountains of sheer rock. At various points during their passage, bales of dried salmon were cached, in case they should be needed on the homeward way. During the greater part of the voyage the men lived upon the land, that is to say, they were dependent upon the Indians for their supply of provisions.

Salmon, dried and fresh, berries, nuts, wild onions, and other viands were sometimes abundant; but often the men were in sore straits for food. The voyageurs, like the Carthagenians of old, were fond of dog's flesh, and, whenever they lodged at a village or encampment of friendly natives, they feasted upon this delicacy.

Now floating peacefully with the tide, now dashing wildly down terrific rapids, the canoes went swiftly forward. Quite frequently, however, the baggage and even the canoes themselves had to be carried over long and difficult portages, where deep ravines, steep hills, and yawning chasms appeared to offer insuperable obstacles. The men suffered greatly; and often their path was rough with jagged stones, so that their moccasins were frequently and quickly in disrepair as, footsore and weary, they carried their heavy packs from point to point where they might again launch their frail vessels upon the turbulent stream, then in high flood. It was not long before the accounts of the natives were verified; soon the expedition reached that part of the river which is but a succession of canyons and rapids.

At one place for two miles, the river foamed and boiled between "high banks which contracted the channel in many places to forty or fifty yards." The journal continues:—"This immense body of water passing through this narrow space in a turbulent manner, formed numerous gulfs and cascades, and making a tremendous noise, had an awful and forbidding appearance. Nevertheless, since it was considered as next to impossible to carry the canoes across the land, on account of the height and steepness of the hills, it was resolved to venture down the dangerous pass." Five of the most experienced men were ordered into a canoe, and in a moment it was



under way. "After passing the first cascade," Fraser continues, "she lost her course and was drawn into the eddy where she was swirled about for a considerable time, seemingly in suspense whether to sink or swim, the men having no power over her. However, she took a favourable turn and by degrees was led from this dangerous vortex again into the stream. In this manner she continued, flying from one cascade to another until the last but one, where, in spite of every effort, the whirlpools forced her against a low, projecting rock. Upon this, the men debarked, saving their own lives, and contrived to save the property, but the greatest difficulty was still ahead, and to continue by water would be the way to certain destruction."

The journal then proceeds:—"During this distressing scene we were on shore looking on and anxiously concerned. Seeing our poor fellows once more safe afforded us much satisfaction but their situation rendered our approach perilous and difficult. The bank was extremely high and steep and we had to plunge our daggers at intervals into the ground, to check our speed as otherwise we were disposed to slide into the river. We cut steps into the declivity, fastened a line into the front of the canoe with which one of the men ascended, in order to haul it up, while the others supported it upon their arms. In this manner our situation was most precarious, our lives hung as it were upon a thread, as the failure of the line or a false step of one of the men, might have hurled the whole of us into eternity. However, we fortunately cleared the bank before dark."

Again the party proceeded, and arrived at the Great Canyon, near the point where Kelly Creek enters the river. At this place the men donned their best clothes, and the two Indians being clothed only in skins, were each given a blanket and cape, so that the party might appear to good advantage to the new tribe that dwelt on the banks of the river below. The rapid was soon reached, and Fraser's description of it runs thus:—"Here, the channel contracts to about 40 yards, and is enclosed by two precipices of immense height, which, bending towards each other, make it narrower above than below. The water which rolls down this extraordinary passage in tumultuous waves and with great velocity, had a frightful appearance. However, it being absolutely impossible to carry the canoes by land, all hands without hesitation embarked as it were a *'corps perdu'* upon the



mercy of this awful tide. Once launched, the die was cast, our great difficulty consisted in keeping the canoes within the medium, or, *fil d'eau*, that is, clear of the precipice on the one side, and from the gulfs formed by the waves on the other. Thus skimming along as fast as lightning, the crews cool and determined, following each other in awful silence, and when we arrived at the end, we stood gazing at each other in silent congratulations at our narrow escape from total destruction."

Having arrived at the Indian camp below the canyon, the river was reported by the natives "as a dreadful chain of apparently insurmountable difficulties" and it was asserted that it would be impossible for strangers to proceed either by land or water, owing to the rapids and the mountainous nature of the country through which the river forced its way. Nevertheless the undaunted leader having prevailed upon an Indian to accompany him as pilot continued his journey.

Of the country through which he passed that 9th of June, 1808, Fraser remarks:—"I scarcely saw anything so dreary and dangerous in any country, and at present, while writing this, whatever way I turn my eyes, mountains upon mountains, whose summits are covered with eternal snows close the gloomy scene."

On the following day it was borne in upon Fraser that it was impossible to proceed by water, and it was therefore decided to continue the journey by land along the banks of the river. Accordingly, near Pavilion Creek, a scaffolding was erected upon which the canoes were placed, covered by branches of trees to protect them from the sun. Such articles as could not be carried were buried in the ground, some openly before the Indians, but others in a secret cache, as it was deemed inadvisable to place implicit trust in their expressions of good will. The vessels used up to this point were the ordinary birch bark canoes of the Canadian furtrader. The canoes of the Indians of the Fraser are of a totally different type, being dug-outs, of the form so familiar even in the present day. On the upper reaches of the river, the natives make their canoes from the trunk of the cottonwood tree, but on the lower reaches, as on the coast, the canoes are made from cedar. The cottonwood canoes are not nearly so symmetrical or so well finished as those made from cedar. Cottonwood warps rather easily, whereas cedar will retain its shape indefinitely.





The explorer had now entered the territory of the Lillooets, or as he termed them, the "Askettih nation." These natives treated the strangers with great kindness and regaled them with "roots, wild onion syrup, dried salmon and berries." Here Fraser learned that the sea was distant about "ten nights" from the village. A garrulous old man claimed that he had been to the "Stinking Lake" where he had seen great caves, and he gave a pantomimic exhibition of the behaviour of the white men he had met at the coast, strutting up and down he exclaimed "this is the way they go."

An idea of the care with which it was necessary to proceed may be gathered from an entry in the journal under the date of 14th June. "Last night (it is recorded), some of the natives, having remarked that we were not white men but enemies in disguise, gave offence to our old chief and a serious altercation took place in consequence. They stated that his tribe were their natural enemies and that some of his young men had made war upon them in the Spring. This he readily admitted, but observed that these were foolish young men who escaped without his knowledge. Seeing that the debate was growing warm, we interposed and the argument ended amicably. Then the Old Chief sent couriers ahead to inform the Natives that we were not enemies; not to be alarmed at our appearance and to meet us without arms, at the same time he strongly recommended us to be on our guard."

On the 14th, Fraser reached "the Forks," in all probability the junction of the Bridge and Fraser rivers. As it was deemed important that the Lillooets should be duly impressed with the mission, the men shaved and dressed in their best apparel before resuming the march. Soon the ambassadors of the "Askettihs" appeared, "dressed in their coats of mail," as the explorer termed the leather jackets of these people. With all due ceremony a palaver was held with the ambassadors, who "looked manly and had really the appearance of warriors." The chiefs spoke with a certain rude grace and fluency, and their oratory had a great effect upon the native retinue. The explorer seized the occasion to speak of the advantages that would accrue to the Indians if friendly relations should be established with the white men. It will be recalled that he had been instructed to prepare the way for the establishment of trading stations near the mouth of the river.



For several days three friendly Indians had accompanied the party, an old chief, a guide and an interpreter. These had volunteered to introduce the explorer to the different tribes whose territories lay in his path. So far they had faithfully kept their word, and had materially assisted in preparing the way for a friendly reception from chiefs who, otherwise, might have been hostile to the strangers. However, on the morning following the palaver with the Lillooet chiefs, Fraser, to his mortification, found that these men had disappeared in the night. Evidently, like all the natives of the upper reaches, they feared the tribes that dwelt near the mouth of the river, especially the fierce warriors of the Cowichan nation, whose forays kept the clans of the lower river in a perpetual state of alarm. This untoward incident gave the explorer pause for anxious thought. "Here we are," he states in his journal after relating the disappearance of the guides, "in a strange country surrounded with danger and numberless tribes of savages who have never seen the face of a white man; however, we shall endeavor to make the best of it."

Pursuing his journey the furtrader and his little following reached Lillooet on the 15th of June. "The village (says Fraser) is a fortification of 100 feet by 24 surrounded by (a) pallisade eighteen feet high, slanting inward and lined with a shorter row which supports a shade, covering, with bark, constituting the dwellings." At the "Metropolis" of the Askettih tribe, Fraser, after much haggling and bargaining obtained a canoe for a file and a kettle; but the natives would not part with their provisions. By dint of much persuasion, however, thirty dried salmon were procured. The wares of the trader had already found their way to this country. A new copper tea kettle and a large gun, of Russian make, were seen in the village.

In passing from Soda Creek to Lillooet no less than fifteen days were consumed. Soda Creek was left behind on May 31st and Lillooet reached on June 15th; but Fraser was often obliged to stop by the way to placate the Indians, and in these friendly overtures much time was lost.

Four days after leaving Lillooet, the expedition passed into the territory of the Thompson Indians, whom Fraser calls "Hacamaugh." The men were handsomely dressed in leather, and they possessed many horses, with which they helped him at a carrying



place near by. The explorer was greatly impressed with this fine tribe. He thus alludes to one of its encampments, not far from Lytton: "The Indians of this village were about four hundred souls, and some of them appeared very old. They live among mountains, and enjoy pure air, are cleanly inclined, and make use of wholesome food. We observed several European articles among them, viz: a copper tea kettle, a brass camp kettle, a strip from a common blanket and clothing such as the Cree women wear. These things we supposed, were brought from our settlements beyond the mountains; indeed the Indians make us understand as much."<sup>1</sup>

Of all the villages visited on this occasion, scarcely any were without articles of European manufacture, which shows that inter-tribal commerce flourished among the primitive peoples of the transmontane region. As a matter of fact, Simon Fraser was at this time on the most frequented of the few great trade routes, or lines of intercourse, which, in pre-historic times, connected the littoral with the interior. Other lines of communication followed,—the Nass River, the Skeena River, and the Bella Coola River (the route followed by Sir Alexander Mackenzie in 1793). From time immemorial the native merchants of the coast and of the interior had met on the banks of these rivers to exchange the commodities of their respective territories. An interchange of culture probably followed those avenues of communication and trade; but the anthropologist or the ethnologist is more concerned with that phase of the subject than the historian—therefore it will not be discussed here. Of all these lines of social and commercial intercourse, north of the Columbia River, the one following the Fraser was perhaps the most important. The wares of the maritime furtrader were passed from tribe to tribe along this ancient highway of the native races, and so reached the remotest parts of the northern interior.

On the same day (June 19th) Fraser visited the great village at the confluence of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers. "Camchin," as the natives called this place, is beautifully situated on a high terrace on the left bank of the Fraser, just below the point where the clear waters of the Thompson join the larger stream. It was at that time an important centre of the Thompson Indians—perhaps the most cultured and enlightened of all the aborigines of British Columbia.

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Fraser's Journal, Masson, p. 181.



The town of Lytton, founded in the year of the great gold rush, now stands on, or near, the site of the populous Indian village first described by Simon Fraser more than a century ago. He was given an impressive welcome, which is thus recorded in his Journal:

"After having remained some time in the village, the principal chief invited us over the river and received us at the water side, where, assisted by several others, he took me by the arm and conducted me in a moment up the hill to the camp. Here his people were sitting in rows to the number of twelve hundred, and I had to shake hands with the whole. Then the Great Chief made a long harangue, in the course of which he pointed to the Sun, to the four quarters of the World and then to us; he afterwards introduced his father who was old and blind and carried by another man, who also made a harangue of some length. The old blind man was placed near us, and he often stretched out both his hands, through curiosity, in order to feel ours.

"The Hacamaugh nation are different, both in language and manners, from their neighbours, the Askettihs; they have many chiefs and great men and appear to be good orators, their manner of delivery is extremely handsome. We had every reason to be thankful for our reception at this place. The Indians showed us every possible attention, and supplied our wants as much as they could. We had salmon, berries, oil and roots in abundance, and our men had six dogs.<sup>2</sup> Although our tent was pitched near the camp, we enjoyed entire peace and security during our stay. The Indians sang and danced all night; some of our men who went to see them were much amused."

The explorer, however, was evidently not convinced that his new allies were altogether sincere in their expressions of friendship. "However kind savages may appear," he observed, "I know that it is not in their nature to be sincere in their professions to strangers; the respect and attention we generally experience proceed from an idea that we are superior beings who are not to be overcome; at any rate, it is certain that the less familiar we are with them, the better for us." It is pleasant to recall that, on this occasion at least, the furtrader's distrust of the savage was without foundation: The chief of the Thompson Indians, called by Fraser the "Great Chief," kept

<sup>2</sup> Simon Fraser's Journal, Masson, pp. 181-2.





his word and even went out of his way to befriend the little party of white men.

Before leaving this quarter, Fraser named the river, which enters the Fraser just above Lytton, in honour of David Thompson, astronomer, surveyor, path-finder, explorer, fort-builder and furtrader, also of the North West Company. David Thompson was then engaged in exploring the passes of the Rocky Mountains leading into East Kootenay. "These Forks," says the Journal of the expedition, "the Indians call Camchin, and are formed by a large river, which is the same spoken of so often by our friend the Old Chief. From an idea that our friends of the *Fort des Prairies* department are established upon the source of it, among the mountains, we gave it the name of Thompson River."

This statement clearly shows how little was known at that time of the geography of the interior of Northwestern America. Simon Fraser's mistake has been a fruitful source of error, in that it has led some writers to attribute to David Thompson the discovery of the Fraser's most important tributary, apparently for no other reason than that it was named after that indomitable explorer. As a matter of fact David Thompson never saw the Thompson River; nor does it appear that Thompson even knew that this stream had been named after him. In his "Map of the Northwest Territory of the Province of Canada from Actual Survey during the years 1792 to 1812,"<sup>3</sup> made in 1813 and 1814, some five or six years after Fraser's memorable excursion, the Thompson is called "Sheewap River." It is strange that such should be the case because the intrepid astronomer and surveyor of the North West Company acknowledges that he obtained his information respecting the Fraser River from John Stuart, who accompanied Simon Fraser in 1808. Perhaps John Stuart did not mention that the stream had been named Thompson River; or perhaps the famous map maker was too modest to give his name to a river he had not discovered, or even seen.

The morning after the memorable reception at Camchin, the party again embarked, having obtained two canoes from the Thompson Indians. The "Great Chief" and a guide, nicknamed in the explorer's Journal the "Little Fellow," accompanied Fraser in order to introduce him to the tribes below, which, as usual, were repre-

<sup>3</sup> Published with Elliott Coues' *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, New York, 1897.



sented as being a ferocious and warlike people. The men had suffered great hardships in their traverse of the river to this point, notably in the canyons between Soda Creek and Lillooet; but they now entered upon perhaps the most arduous part of their journey. Between Lytton and Yale the Fraser forces its way through a series of deep chasms, the rocky walls of which in many places tower high above the water. The great river, swollen with melted snows, surged magnificently through the canyons. On every side rugged snow-crowned mountains, like grim sentinels, stood guard over the foaming cataracts; the banks were so steep that they could only be scaled at imminent risk. Such was the Fraser River between Lytton and Yale in floodtime, in the old days before the railway. The track of the explorer lay directly through this region of wild grandeur and Titanic upheaval.

It was soon found impossible to follow the river. At Jackass Mountain, so named by the goldseekers of a later generation, the men were forced to carry everything, including their canoes, over that steep hill. The ascent was dangerous in the extreme, as the loose stones which covered the mountain continually gave way under the feet of the men as they toiled with their heavy loads. A false step meant certain destruction as a precipice yawned immediately below, at the foot of which the river ran in a series of turbulent rapids. The Indians told the explorer that several years before several of their tribe in traversing the hill had lost their balance, and, falling headlong into the river, had perished. The miners of 1858 and 1859 were sorely tried at this same spot.

In the face of these appalling obstacles the expedition worked its way downstream, sometimes by land and sometimes by water. Neither the remonstrances of his men, nor the warnings of the natives, had any effect on Fraser, who at all costs was determined to carry out his instructions to reach the sea by following the unknown river to its mouth. He pushed on with that dogged determination which distinguished all his undertakings.

From time immemorial, here, as at the Dalles and other places on the Columbia River, the Indians had foregathered to catch and dry the salmon, which was the staple article of diet of the natives of that quarter. Judging from Fraser's remarks, the Indian population



must have been large, for he visited many encampments. The natives had erected stages on the ledges overhanging the river, and from these they used their dip nets with remarkable dexterity. Either because the run had not commenced, or because it was a poor year, salmon seemed to have been rather scarce. More than once the explorer observed that the natives were without food. At other places, he was feasted with roasted salmon, wild fruits and nuts, wild onion syrup, and other viands esteemed by the Indians.

On Sunday, June 25th, the Chief of the Camchin or Thompson Indians left the expedition to return to his people. The parting is thus recorded: "This man is the greatest Chief we have seen, he behaved uncommonly well towards us, and in return I made him a present of a large silver brooch which he immediately fixed on his head, and seemed exceedingly well pleased with our attentions." Tradition had it that this silver brooch was buried with the chief as one of his most cherished possessions.

Although it was Sunday, the party pushed on, embarking at the early hour of five. It was a memorable day in the history of the expedition. The Journal vividly portrays the difficulties encountered on this forced march. In writing of the road through one of the canyons, probably that now known as the Black Canyon, Fraser could not restrain his eloquence: "Here," he observed, "we were obliged to carry among loose stones in the face of a steep hill between two precipices. Near the top, where the ascent was perfectly perpendicular, one of the Indians climbed to the summit and by means of a long rope drew us up one after the other. This work took three hours, and then we continued our course up and down hills and along the steep declivities of mountains where hanging rocks and projecting cliffs, at the edge of the bank of the river, made the passage so small as to render it, at times, difficult even for one person to pass sideways. Many of the natives from the last camp who accompanied us were of the greatest use on this intricate occasion. They went on boldly with heavy loads in places where we were obliged to hand our guns from one to another, and where the greatest precaution was required in order to pass even singly and free from encumbrance."

The party encamped at six in the evening, at the head of another rapid or canyon. On the following morning, John Stuart, who had



been sent ahead to examine the river, reported that "navigation was absolutely impracticable." The men, therefore, had no other recourse but to follow their agile guides along the treacherous pathways which had served successive generations of native travellers. The stupendous character of this rugged country is well portrayed by Fraser: "As for the road by land," he wrote, "we could scarcely make our way with even only our guns. I have been for a long period in the Rocky Mountains, but have never seen anything like this country. It is so wild that I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human beings should venture; yet in those places there is a regular footpath impressed, or rather indented upon the very rocks by frequent travelling. Besides this, steps which are formed like a ladder or the shrouds of a ship, by poles hanging to one another and crossed at certain distances with twigs, the whole suspended from the top to the foot of deep precipices and fastened to both extremities to stones and trees, furnish a safe and convenient passage to the Natives; but we, who had not had the advantage of their education and experience, were often in imminent danger when obliged to follow their example." The ladders here described were in use long after the explorer's day. Indeed, some of them still existed in a state of good repair at the time of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, although the Yale-Cariboo Wagon Road had for several years superseded them. The engineers of the Canadian Pacific Railway called this place Jacob's Ladder Bluff. It is some five or six miles below Boston Bar, on the railway side of the river.

At Spuzzum, which was reached on June 27th, the party was "hospitably entertained with fresh salmon, boiled green and dried berries, oil and onions." The burial ground across the river from the Indian encampment attracted Fraser's attention and he obtained permission to visit it. He thus records his impressions of the native sepulchres at this place: "These tombs are superior to anything of the kind I saw among savages; they are about fifteen feet long and of the form of a chest of drawers. Upon the boards and posts, are beasts and birds carved in a curious but rude manner, yet pretty well proportioned. These monuments must have cost the workmen much time and labour, as they must have been destitute of proper





tools for their execution; around the tombs was deposited all the property of the deceased."

The expedition had now reached another tribal territory. Spuzum was situated on "the boundary between the Hacamaugh and Achinrow nations." It was observed that the members of the latter clan differed in speech and manners from the tribes hitherto met with. These natives were distinguished for their fine blankets, woven from the hair of the wild goat, or from that of a white dog bred for this purpose. Their blankets were "as good as the wool rugs found in Canada," and were spun with a primitive spindle and distaff. It was noticed that the dogs had been lately shorn.<sup>4</sup>

At last the little party emerged from the great canyon. At four p. m. on Wednesday, June 28th, the expedition arrived at an Indian camp of about one hundred and fifty inhabitants; apparently at, or near the place where, in after years, the Hudson's Bay Company built Fort Yale. No less than eight days had been consumed in passing from Lytton to this spot. The Indians were armed with bows and arrows, spears and clubs. Like those of Camchin, they had many ornaments—"shells of different kinds, shell beads, brass made into pipes hanging from the neck or across the shoulders, bracelets of large brass wire, and some of horn." It was observed that their hats, made of wattap, and some of "cedar bark painted in different colours, resembling ribbon." Both sexes were stoutly built and some of the men handsome, "but," wrote Fraser, "I cannot say so much of the women, who seem to be their husbands' slaves, for, in the course of their dances, I remarked that the men were in the habit of pillaging them from one another. Our Little Fellow was presented with another man's wife."

The natives of this place said that white men "had come from below to the Bad Rock, where the rapid terminates, at a little distance from the village, and they showed us marks in the rocks which they had made, but, which, by the bye, seemed to us to be nothing but natural marks."

Having with some difficulty obtained canoes, Fraser marshalled his little force and again embarked. As the expedition advanced the river became broader and the country assumed a different aspect,

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander Caulfield Anderson describes these dogs and dogs' hair blankets in "Notes on the Indian Tribes of North America."



although the snowclad summits of the Coast Range were still in full view. From Yale to the Gulf of Georgia, the Fraser is a broad highway. No difficulty was experienced in the beautiful reaches of the lower river. So far as it is known, this was the first time that a European had beheld this magnificent country. Noble forests stood on either bank, except where great meadows stretched far back from the river. As the river was in flood, the low-lying lands must have been covered with water; near Chilliwack it "expanded into a lake." In this neighbourhood the explorer sighted a "large round mountain," called by the natives "Stremotch." No doubt this was Sumas Mountain, a well-known geographical feature of the Chilliwack district. In 1828, Sir George Simpson, in passing this same stretch of the river, refers to a high mountain which he called "Sugar Loaf Mountain." Perhaps, the "Stremotch" of Fraser and the "Sugar Loaf" Mountain of Simpson, refer to one and the same striking feature of the landscape.

Seals were now seen in the river, a sure indication that the passage to the sea was unobstructed, for these animals do not attempt to ascend rapids. At sunset, camp was pitched near a grove of "remarkably large cedars five fathoms in circumference." The Journal adds that "mosquitos were in clouds."

In that day the natives were numerous. Their villages and fishing camps were found at every favourable situation. The explorer concluded that they had seen white people before, because "they evinced no kind of surprise or curiosity at seeing us, nor were they afraid of our arms." One of their large communal dwellings is thus described:

"Their houses are built of cedar planks and, in shape, similar to the one already described; the whole range, which is six hundred and forty feet long by sixty broad, is under one roof; the front is eighteen feet high and the covering is slanting: all the apartments, which are separated by partitions, are square, except the chief's, which is ninety feet long. In this room, the posts or pillars are nearly three feet diameter at the base and diminish gradually to the top. In one of these posts is an oval opening answering the purpose of a door through which one man may crawl in or out. Above, on the outside, are carved a human figure as large as life, with other figures in imitation of beasts and birds. These buildings have no flooring, the



fires are in the center and the smoke goes out by an opening at the top." <sup>5</sup>

Sweeping past low-wooded banks, fat delta lands and fertile benches, now, a century later, the home of prosperous and progressive communities, Fraser entered that beautiful stretch of river known as Queen's Reach. On the 2nd of July, he passed the pine-clad hill later selected by Lieutenant Colonel Moody, of the Royal Engineers, as the site of the capital of the Crown Colony of British Columbia. At that time a dense virgin forest covered the hill where now stands the city of New Westminster. Finding that the river at this point divided into several channels, the explorer followed the North Arm, and was at last rewarded with a view of the Gulf of Georgia, so named by Vancouver in 1792, but first discovered by the Spaniard Eliza in 1791, and called by him in the musical language of his country "El Gran Canal de Nuestra Senora del Rosario."

But the passage of the explorer was not without incident. Shortly after leaving the broad expanse of water above Lulu Island, a canoe came alongside and one of the natives embarked with the explorer; for the purpose, it was thought, of piloting the expedition through the right channel. It was soon remarked, however, that other Indians, "armed with bows and arrows, spears, clubs, were pursuing us in their canoes, singing war songs, beating time with their paddles on the sides of the canoe, and making signs and gestures highly inimicable. The one who had embarked with us became also very unruly, singing, dancing and kicking up a great dust: we threatened him and he mended his manners and became quiet."

"This was an alarming crisis," continues the Journal, "but we were not discouraged; confident upon our own superiority, at least on the water, we continued and at last we came in sight of a gulf or bay of the sea; this, the Indians called Pas-hil-roë. It runs in a south-west and north-east direction. In this bay are several high and rocky islands, whose summits are covered with snow. On the right shore we noticed a village called by the natives Misquame: we directed our course towards it. Our turbulent passenger conducted us up a small winding river to a small lake near which the village stood: there we landed, but only found a few old men and women, the others having fled into the woods on our approach. The fort is

<sup>5</sup> Simon Fraser's Journal, Masson, p. 197.



1,500 feet in length and 90 feet in breadth. The houses, which are constructed as those mentioned in other places, are in rows; one of the natives, after conducting us through all the apartments, desired us to go away, as, otherwise, the Indians would be apt to attack us. About this time those that had followed us from above, arrived.”<sup>6</sup>

The explorer and his men spent an hour in examining the place. Upon returning to the canoe it was found high and dry on the beach, the tide having ebbed. While the men were engaged in dragging the little vessel to the water, the natives made their appearance from all directions, armed cap à pie, and “howling like so many wolves and brandishing their war clubs.” The canoe was quickly launched, however, and the party escaped from an awkward predicament.

It is evident that Fraser actually reached the Gulf of Georgia. Several writers have asserted that he turned back at the point where the city of New Westminster now stands; but if this had been the case the journey would have ended at the place “where the river divides into several places,”—which description can only refer to the reaches immediately below the Royal City. Fraser’s particular description of Musquiam, however, leaves no doubt upon the point. That village is situated exactly at the mouth of the northern outlet of the north arm of the Fraser River on the shore of the Gulf of Georgia. If further proof should be required, it is found in David Thompson’s great map of North Western America, which bears the following legend, opposite the words “Musquiam Village,” “Mr. Simon Fraser and party returned from the Sortie of the River.”

As to the small winding river and small lake, it will suffice to point out that a little rivulet, now as in Fraser’s time, flows past Musquiam; the lake was no doubt formed by the flooding of the lowland between the village and the river. This land is now dyked and therefore not subject to overflow. It should be borne in mind that the river was at its highest stage when Fraser descended it in 1808.

Much as Simon Fraser desired to reach the Pacific, he was at this point compelled to turn back. The hostility of the natives and lack of supplies made further progress impossible. In this respect he was no more fortunate than Sir Alexander Mackenzie in 1793. Neither of the explorers sighted the main ocean. Neverthe-

<sup>6</sup> Simon Fraser’s Journal, Masson, p. 199.





less Simon Fraser had accomplished his purpose. He had reached the sea, not, however, by the Columbia, but by another river that henceforth was to bear his name. That he did not view the Pacific Ocean was a bitter disappointment to the explorer. "Here again," he wrote in his Journal of July 3, 1808, "I must again acknowledge my great disappointment in not seeing the *main Ocean*, having gone so near it as to be almost within view; we besides wished very much to settle the situation by an observation for the longitude. The latitude is  $49^{\circ}$  nearly, while that of the entrance to the Columbia is  $46^{\circ} 20'$ . This river therefore is not the Columbia."

Having accomplished his purpose Fraser started on his long return journey to the northern interior. His difficulties were by no means over. He was continually harassed by the natives, who followed him with the set purpose of annihilating the whole expedition. It was only by proceeding with the utmost caution that he was able to frustrate the designs of the Indians who had before been loud in their expressions of friendship. Day and night it was necessary to be continually on guard. At an encampment above Chilliwack all the warriors were waiting to attack the white men. It was soon discovered that "they were not assembled for any good purpose, and when we came opposite to them the whole were in motion. Some were in canoes, others lined the shore and all were inclining our way; at last it was with difficulty we could prevent them with the muzzle of our guns from seizing upon the canoe; they, however, managed to give us such a push with the intention of upsetting us, that our canoe became engaged in a strong current which, in spite of all our efforts, carried us down the rapid. We however gained the shore at the foot of a high hill where we tied the canoe to a tree. Here I ordered Mr. Stuart with some of the men to debark and ascend the hill in order to keep the Indians in awe; they, perceiving our preparation for defence, retired, but still kept ahead."

The continual strain so worked upon the overwrought nerves of the voyageurs, that on the 6th of July they mutinied and threatened to desert in a body. Simon Fraser rose to the occasion. "Considering this scheme as a desperate undertaking," he wrote in his Journal after the trouble was over, "I debarked and endeavoured to persuade the delinquents of their infatuation; but two of them declared in their own names and in the names of the others that their plan was



fixed, and that they saw no other way by which they could save themselves from immediate destruction than by flying out of the way of danger; for, said they, continuing by water, surrounded by hostile nations, who watched every opportunity to attack and torment them, created in their mind a state of suspicion worse than death. I remonstrated and threatened by turns, the other gentlemen joined me in my endeavours to expose the folly of their undertaking, and the advantages that would accrue to us all by remaining, as we had hitherto done, in perfect union for our common safety. After much debate on both sides, they yielded and we all shook hands, resolved not to separate during the voyage, which resolution was immediately confirmed by the following oath taken on the spot by each of the party: 'I solemnly swear before Almighty God that I shall sooner perish than forsake in distress any of our crew during the present voyage.'"

The ascent of the river was scarcely less difficult than the downward journey, but at last the expedition reached the territory of more friendly natives, who expressed surprise at the reappearance of the white men. Evidently they had expected that the Indians of the lower river, or the warlike Cowichans, would kill the travellers.

While thirty-five days were consumed in descending the river, the ascent was accomplished in thirty-four days. In going to the sea Quesnel was reached May 30th; Lytton on June 20th; Spuzzum on June 27th; Yale on June 30th; New Westminster on July 2nd, and Musquiam on the same day. In returning, the Thompson River was passed July 14th; Lillooet on the 22nd; Chilcotin River on the 25th; Soda Creek on the 28th; and on August 6th the journey ended at Fort George, the place of departure.

Such was the nature of Simon Fraser's achievement; such is the story that has almost been forgotten. Surely this rugged man is worthy of all honour and respect. His expedition was the third to reach the shores of the Pacific overland. He was the first European to establish posts in the interior of the great territory lying to the west of the Rocky Mountains. These posts have existed from that time to this. The country in which they are situated is now, more than one hundred years later, about to be developed on a remarkable scale. The name of Simon Fraser, the stalwart pioneer and founder, should not be forgotten in this day. As the Reverend A. G. Morice

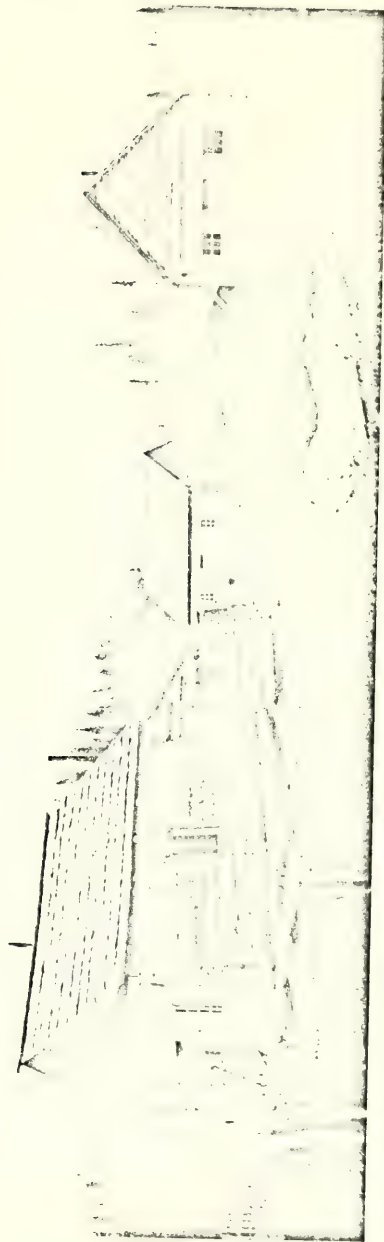


has justly observed—"Less brilliant services would entitle him to the respect of every Canadian."

Simon Fraser did not long remain in New Caledonia after his exploration of the "Great River" discovered by Sir Alexander Mackenzie. He was given charge of a district in Athabasca as a reward for his services beyond the Rocky Mountains. In 1811 he was at Red River, and two years later on the Mackenzie. In 1816, he was at Fort William when that post was taken by the Earl of Selkirk, against whom the North West Company had waged relentless war.

It has been said that Simon Fraser refused the order of knighthood, offered in recognition of his achievement. The probable explanation of the matter is simply this: That he declined the honour because his means were not in keeping with the proffered title, nor sufficient for the purpose of maintaining the position with proper dignity.





FORT GRAHAME, HUDSON'S BAY CO. POST ON FINLAY RIVER





## CHAPTER XI

### NEW CALEDONIA

When Simon Fraser retired from New Caledonia it fell to the lot of John Stuart to guide the destinies of that isolated district for several years. Stuart assumed charge in 1809 and he did not relinquish his post until 1824. He spent much of his time at Fort McLeod, although he visited Lake Stuart, Lake Fraser, and Fort George regularly. It does not appear that Stuart was particularly enamoured of his new position, for in 1810 Daniel Williams Harmon, a pious but shrewd American from Connecticut, in the service of the North West Company, was instructed to relieve him, or, if he (Harmon) should prefer it to accompany Stuart as second in command.<sup>1</sup> Harmon had met Stuart the year before at Dunvegan, on the Peace River, and had formed a high opinion of that eccentric but able officer. His journal of July 19, 1809, records that—"A few days since, Mr. John Stuart and company, came here, from New Caledonia, for goods; and today they set out on their return home. During the few days which that gentleman passed here, I derived much satisfaction from his society. We rambled about the plains, conversing as we went, and now and then stopping, to eat a few berries, which are every-where to be found. He has evidently read and reflected much. How happy should I be to have such a companion, during the whole summer."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the modest author of these lines had equally impressed his guest, and that may be the reason that Harmon was ordered to New Caledonia in the following year. Harmon, however, was not overanxious to take upon himself the management of the western marches of the North West Company, "especially in view of the late unfavourable reports from that country in regard to means of subsistance."<sup>3</sup> He therefore joined

<sup>1</sup> Harmon, Journal, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> Harmon, Journal, p. 180.

<sup>3</sup> Harmon, Journal, p. 186.



Stuart as first lieutenant. The two men—although very different in character—soon became fast friends, as their letters and journals amply testify. Fraser's successor apparently was not always the most cheerful of companions—it has been said that he was querulous and exacting, if not pedantic—but his relations with his subordinates seem to have been cordial. Stuart's character was summed up rather tersely by a contemporary, John M. McLeod, who said—"Upon the whole he is a good man but a person would require to be possessed of the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon to agree with him on all subjects."<sup>4</sup> But whatever may be said of John Stuart's temperament, it cannot be denied that he was an able administrator, a faithful officer and a loyal friend. His letters, which are characteristic of the man, show that he held in high esteem the men with whom he was associated. Therein he unconsciously reveals much of his own character and disposition, as is proved by the following passage:—"I can retire when I please—and I have met with so much of ups and downs and disappointments and what is still worse of ingratitude that I ought to have done it long since and nothing but the hopes I had formed that my constant attendance at the Council might benefit equally the Company and individuals for whom I have long since formed a regard and personal attachment. Mine was no mercenary nor menial vote and as regarded myself I have nothing to gain that could compensate for the turmoil and vexation to which the life of an Indian trader is ever subject. Though neither young nor rich I was perfectly disencumbered and not altogether dependent. I could have lived in contended retirement in the land of my fathers and now that I am removed from the Council to a distant post (Fort Simpson, Mackenzie River), as regarded my friends, I may be considered as one who has ceased to exist. I can be of no use either to them or to myself and I will soon be forgotten."<sup>5</sup> In spite of their somewhat querulous ring, these words reveal that Stuart was imbued with a high sense of duty. He divided with Simon Fraser the honour of founding New Caledonia.

Harmon left Dunvegan—where he had been stationed for two years—for New Caledonia in the Autumn of 1810. He joined John

<sup>4</sup> John M. McLeod to John McLeod, senior, Letter dated Fort Simpson, Mackenzie River. Ms. in Archives Department. March 16th, 1833.

<sup>5</sup> Letter to John McLeod, Fort Simpson, Mackenzie River, 8th March, 1833. Ms. in Archives Department.



Stuart's ingoing brigade and they travelled together as far as Fort McLeod, arriving at that wild spot on November 1st. Stuart had resolved to spend the winter at his favourite post, so here the two men parted. Harmon, with thirteen men, pursued his way to Stuart Lake to assume charge of the fort there. He reached his destination on November 7th,<sup>6</sup> having taken four days to cross over from McLeod Lake, a distance of about ninety miles—a fact which gives an idea of the roughness of that pioneer road, for the furtraders were not accustomed to dawdle by the way.

This new trader, who now appears for the first time upon the stage of New Caledonia, was a remarkable man. A keen and intelligent observer, pious and humane, modest but firm, he was it may be judged, somewhat different from his contemporaries, although there were not wanting even in that crude age and in this rough employment strong Christian men—of whom David Thompson was a striking example. Harmon and Thompson would possibly have had much in common had they been thrown together, but their fields of endeavour lay far apart. Harmon's name, like many another of the founders and builders of the Northwest, has almost been forgotten, and would scarcely now be remembered were it not that he kept a private journal, wherein he jotted down from day to day and year to year the happenings of his post and his impressions of men and things. Fortunately this journal was published shortly after the author retired from New Caledonia. By means of this rare volume those who care to do so may look back upon that distant period and see the furtrader at work, and in so doing appreciate the better his difficulties and privations. The author's accounts of the Western Dene Indians, whose manners and customs he intelligently records, render the Journal of exceptional interest, not only to the historian but also to the anthropologist—both of whom are indebted to Harmon for his trustworthy narrative. It is in such rare books, in the fragmentary journals of the trading posts, and in the letters of the explorers that the historian may gather the materials wherewith to bridge the gulf which divides the present from the past.

In the year 1812 John Stuart, the Bourgeois in command of the

<sup>6</sup> Harmon's Journal gives the date as November 17th, but this is evidently a misprint for the next entry was written on November 12th.



district, was generally to be found at Fort McLeod, which was under James McDougall, the man who had been so severely rebuked by Simon Fraser a year or two before. McDougall seems to have fully retrieved his reputation. Harmon always speaks highly of him and Stuart himself acknowledges that he was an "excellent trader" and a "real Christian." Harmon was stationed at Stuart Lake, and J. M. Quesnel at Fraser Lake, whither he had been sent with ten servants to re-establish the post which had recently been destroyed by fire. Two clerks, Faries and McLeod, were also attached to the district, but the extant records do not specifically define their field of operations. Faries may still have been in charge of Fort George. Harmon, however, does not refer at this time to the post at the mouth of the Nechaco River, and it may be that it had been temporarily abandoned. As Stuart had received reinforcements, the forts were, comparatively speaking, well manned. In November, 1812, the garrison of Fort St. James consisted of "twenty-one labouring men, one interpreter, and five women, besides children."<sup>7</sup> So even in that early day the establishment at Stuart Lake had assumed respectable proportions.

These, then, were the men who were engaged in conducting the business of the North West Company in New Caledonia. The monotony of their existence in this remote and inaccessible country, far beyond the ken of their fellows, was relieved by the excitements incidental to the hazardous enterprise in which they were engaged. Now they are threatened with an Indian conspiracy and swift destruction, for the Carriers have not yet become altogether reconciled to the ways of the strangers in their midst, although they were generally "pleased to see us, and treated us with hospitality."<sup>8</sup> Now it is starvation staring them in the face, for when the salmon fails to appear in the rivers and lakes, the diet of the men is reduced to berries and roots. And then the long journeys to and fro, from one post to another, and excursions into new territory, sorely try the patience of the pioneers, who were so ill-equipped for such adventures in everything but dogged determination and physical endurance. Notwithstanding these difficulties they succeeded in subjugating the savages and the wilderness. In a few years the highways

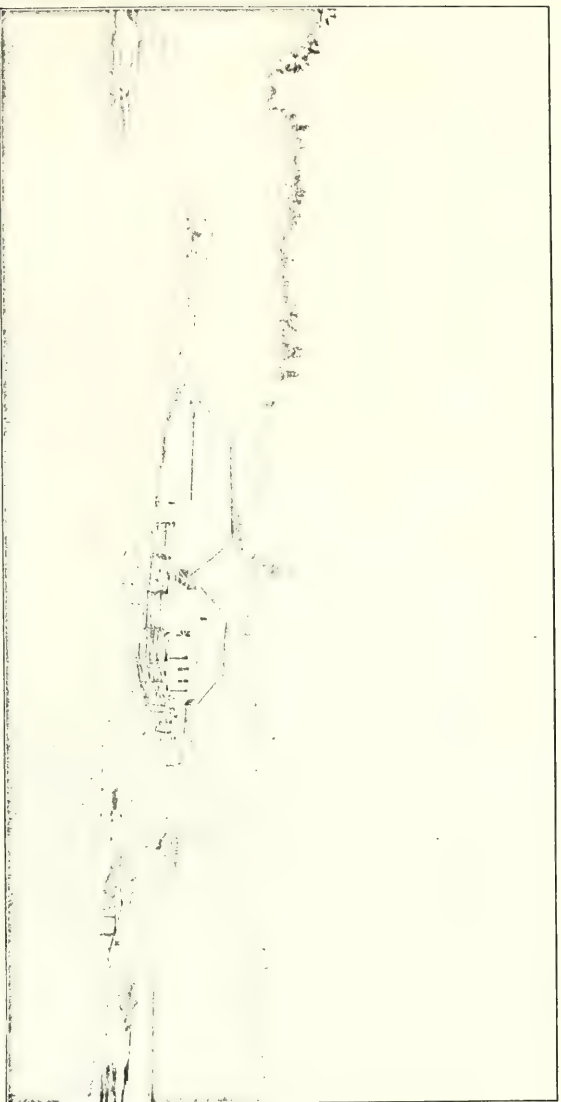
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<sup>7</sup> Harmon, Journal, p. 225.

<sup>8</sup> Harmon, Journal, p. 220.

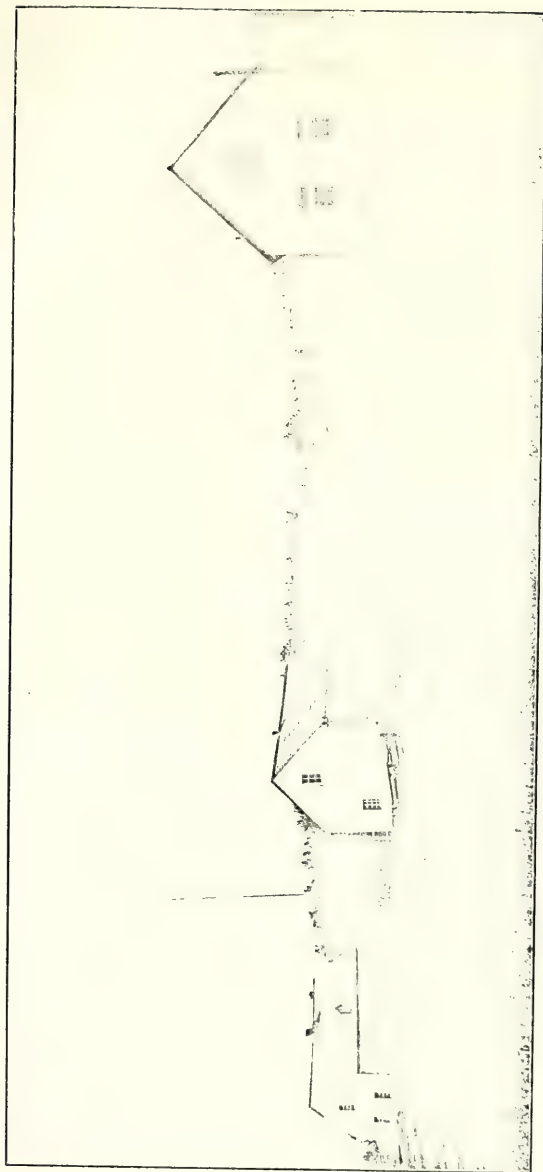






FORT McLEOD, HUDSON'S BAY CO. POST, McLEOD LAKE, FOUNDED 1805; FIRST POST BUILT WEST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS





HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S POST, NEAR FRASER LAKE, FOUNDED 1806



and byways of rugged New Caledonia became as familiar to the fur-trader stationed in that district as the oft-travelled roads of the more accessible provinces in the East.

Harmon lived nine years in New Caledonia—1810 to 1819—and like Samuel Pepys of another time and place he confided to his diary his innermost thoughts; even the religious doubts and fears that beset his mind are duly recorded therein. The general consensus of opinion regarding the furtrader is that he was a blunt hard-living man—a creature of the extraordinary conditions which had called him into being—a man wedded to hardship and danger and perhaps rather given to trickery and licentiousness. But here is one who upsets all such conclusions. What is to be said of a fur-trader who sets apart the first day of each month for prayer and meditation? This, strange to say, was one of the pious rules of Daniel Williams Harmon, who in the second decade of the nineteenth century, made his home at Fort St. James. As might be expected, this honest man's narrative throws a strong light on the customs in vogue at the frontier forts and the practice of the savages who frequented these embryonic outposts of empire. Because the observations of a trustworthy contemporary, especially when they deal with historic events of no small significance, cannot fail to arouse deep interest, or at least to excite legitimate curiosity, the pages of Harmon's Journal will be freely used to illumine that early period of our history.

Shortly after his arrival at Fort St. James—which by the way, was not so named until many years later—Harmon visited the post at Fraser Lake, and here he spent the first day of the New Year (1811). His entry of that date throws a side-light on one of the social conventions of the age. On special occasions—for instance after a long and difficult journey, or upon a recognized holiday—the servants of the Company were treated to what was commonly called a "regale," which was neither more nor less than a plentiful supply of ardent spirits, generally in the form of rum. New Year's Day was the day above all others set apart for relaxation and mirth. Drinking and dancing and, it must be added, fighting—for such convivial gatherings frequently ended in a general melee—were the favourite amusements of the light-hearted "engagé," who for the time being threw care to the winds and drowned the memory of his



hardships in heroic libations. The journals and letters of the fur-traders contain many references to such orgies, which were taken as a matter of course and of custom. On January 1, 1793, at Fort Fork on Peace River, the men of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's over-land expedition saluted their chief with a volley from their muskets, and they were rewarded with copious rations of rum, with which they made merry. At Fort Fraser, on January 1, 1811, the time-honoured festivities are duly observed. Harmon relates:

"This being the first day of another year, our people have passed it, according to the custom of the Canadians, in drinking and fighting. Some of the principal Indians of this place desired us to allow them to remain at the fort, that they might see our people drink. As soon as they began to be a little intoxicated, and to quarrel among themselves, the natives began to be apprehensive, that something unpleasant might befall them, also. They therefore hid themselves under beds, and elsewhere, saying, that they thought the white people had run mad, for they appeared not to know what they were about. They perceived that those who were the most beastly in the early part of the day, became the most quiet in the latter part, in view of which, they exclaimed, 'the senses of the white people have returned to them again,' and they appeared not a little surprised at the change; for it was the first time, they had ever seen a person intoxicated."<sup>9</sup>

There is a sequel to this story. New Year's Day, 1812, was observed with the usual honours at Fort St. James. This time the Indians were admitted to the feast; but, judging from Harmon's account of their behaviour, they had profited by their experience at Fraser Lake the year before. Harmon and James McDougall of McLeod Lake, who was spending the holiday with his friend, dined with all the people of the establishment in the common hall. After the banquet the host "invited several of the Sicaú (Sekanais) and Carrier chiefs, and most respectable men, to partake of the provisions which we had left; and I was surprised to see them behave with much decency, while eating, and while drinking a flagon or two of spirits. After they had finished their repast, they smoked their pipes, and conversed rationally, on the great difference which there is between the manners and customs of civilized people, and

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<sup>9</sup> Harmon, *Journal*, pp. 196-197.





those of the savages. They readily conceded, that ours are superior to theirs."

By means of such passages as these just quoted, one may catch a glimpse of the furtrader at play. His feasting and merry-makings, however, were few and far between. His days were generally spent in toil. Life at the frontier posts was often arduous and not without danger. The first duty of the bourgeois, or officer, in charge of a district was the gathering of furs. His usefulness was judged by the measure of his bales of peltries, and his promotion depended entirely upon his ability to induce the native hunter to bring in beaver. If the old records are to be believed the Carriers were not too fond of work. Fraser inveighed against them as an "indolent, thievish set of vagabonds," who would not hunt regularly although "amazing fond of goods." The explorer attributed this failing to the fact that they obtained their supplies from neighbouring tribes, who in turn traded with "the natives of the seacoast," where articles were procured from the ships of adventurers. In spite of the difficulty experienced by the pioneer traders in getting the Carriers to hunt, the returns from New Caledonia were large. As the years went by the natives became more tractable and that district one of the richest provinces of the North West Company.

Perhaps in no department of all the vast country that the North West Company had brought under its sway were the amenities of civilization less in evidence than in the New Caledonia of that formative period. Nearly all of the men who were stationed there spoke in no measured terms of the privations they were forced to endure, and the monotony of their existence. The fare was always a source of bitter complaint. On the great plains bison, game and wild fowl were abundant. But in inaccessible New Caledonia the posts were dependent upon the salmon which spawns in the tributary streams of the lakes of the northern interior. Fresh salmon in the summer and dried salmon in all other seasons formed the New Caledonian staff of life. Simon Fraser called dried salmon "poor stuff," and succeeding generations of traders have confirmed his judgment. Occasionally the diet would be varied with venison, bear meat, or perhaps sturgeon. The capture of a sturgeon was an event of no small importance and it was always duly recorded. "This morning," wrote Harmon on Tuesday, May 23, 1812, "the natives caught a sturgeon that



would weigh about two hundred and fifty pounds. We frequently see in this lake those which are much larger, which we cannot take, for the want of nets, sufficiently strong to hold them." It will be recalled that Stuart Lake was first known as Sturgeon Lake.

As the month of August approached the rivers would be anxiously scanned by both white man and Indian, for often life or death hung upon the appearance of salmon. "As soon as one is caught," writes Harmon, "the Natives always make a feast, to express their joy at the arrival of these fish. The person who first sees a salmon in the river, exclaims, Ta-loe nas-lay! Ta-loe nas-lay! In English, Salmon have arrived! Salmon have arrived! and the exclamation is caught with joy and uttered with animation by every person in the village."

How important a part the salmon played in the domestic economy of the establishments is shown by the surviving diaries and letters of that day. Thus Harmon's entry bearing date of August 2nd, 1811, is pregnant with meaning: "Our whole stock of provisions in the fort, for ten persons, consists of five salmon only. It is impossible, at this season, to take fish out of this lake or river. Unless the salmon from the sea soon make their appearance, our condition will be deplorable." A week later Harmon and his people must have been in great distress for lack of food, for the journal of August 10th contains the following significant passage—"Sent all our people, consisting of men, women and children, to gather berries at Pinchy (Pinche)"—a village about fourteen miles distant from Fort St. James. The next entry announces that "one of the natives has caught a salmon, which is joyful intelligence to us all; for we hope and expect that, in a few days, we shall have them in abundance." Then the anxiety of the little settlement is suddenly relieved by the appearance of shoals of fish, according to their wont in full years. The journal of September 2 (1811) records—"We now have the common salmon in abundance. They weigh from five to seven pounds. There are also a few of the larger kind, which will weigh sixty or seventy pounds. Both of them are very good, when just taken out of the water. But when dried, as they are by the Indians here, by the heat of the sun, or in the smoke of a fire, they are not very palatable. When salted, they are excellent." Before the end of October twenty-five thousand salmon were placed in the store-house at Fort St. James,



so the wants of the establishment were amply provided for. The usual ration was four dried fish a day to each man.<sup>10</sup> Besides the salmon, many thousands of white fish were taken at the different fishing stations—one of which was at Stella, on Lake Stuart. "Our fishermen have returned to the fort," writes the faithful historian of New Caledonia on November 16, 1811, "and inform me that they have taken seven thousand white fish. These fish, which, singly, will weigh from three to four pounds, were taken in nine nets, of sixty fathoms each."

These entries are interesting if for no other reason than that they illustrate in a striking manner the precarious position of the early furtrader in New Caledonia. All went well when the salmon were running, but when the fish failed to reach the spawning ground in large numbers—which usually happened in two years out of four—the situation wore a different aspect. Then it was a difficult matter to find provisions for the posts.

All the establishments were held to be self-supporting, that is to say no supplies other than the goods needed for the trade came in from the outside, with the exception of small allowances of such simple luxuries as tea, sugar, salt, pepper, and perhaps a little flour. Ardent spirits, of course, both for the men and the trade, were also supplied. The inaccessibility of New Caledonia and the tedious and dangerous route by which it was reached prohibited the ingoing brigades from carrying anything but bare necessities. All the supplies came from Montreal and a year might be consumed in transporting them across the continent. At Montreal the outfits for the posts of the western frontier were made up into suitable packages and addressed—each being marked for its particular destination—thence the heavy brigades carried them to Fort William, where stood the great council chamber of the mighty North-westers—"the lords of the ascendant," as Washington Irving called them in his matchless description of the glory that was Fort William's in the early years of the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> At Fort William bales and packages were again assorted and distributed among the light brigades destined for the farthestmost parts of the wild countries of the north and west. The assortment of wares and supplies

<sup>10</sup> Harmon, *Journal*, p. 213.

<sup>11</sup> Washington Irving, *Astoria*, Chapter I.



assigned to New Caledonia was taken to Fort Chipewyan, on lordly Lake Athabasca. To this point came the bourgeois or superintendent of the district with his bales of furs—the product of his season's bartering—there to exchange them for his meagre supplies. It is hard to say what was allotted to New Caledonia in the days of the North West Company, as the records are not now available, but the Minutes of the Council held at Norway House in June, 1825, show the outfit for that year to have been "108 ps. in 6 canoes wh 32 men, guide included."<sup>12</sup> If this was the allowance for the department in 1825, when its bounds extended far beyond those of the time when Harnion was stationed at Fort St. James, it is reasonable to suppose that the outfit of earlier years was small indeed.

The route to New Caledonia followed the Peace River, Parsnip River, and Pack River to McLeod Lake, often called Trout Lake in the earliest records of the district. Thence a rough trail, about ninety miles in length, followed an old Indian path to Fort St. James, which in after years became the busy capital of New Caledonia. For a time there was no other route to and from the posts west of the Rocky Mountains. It was not long, however, before the road by the Yellowhead Pass, Tête Jaune Cache and the main fork of the Fraser was discovered and more or less frequently used, especially by the expeditions despatched for leather, which article, not being produced in sufficient quantities in New Caledonia, had to be brought in from outside. Tête Jaune Cache, as the term itself implies, was named after a yellow-haired trapper who plied his calling in that neighbourhood and hid his furs and supplies at the head of the navigable part of the main branch of the Fraser River which finds its source in Cowdung Lake. This point—Tête Jaune Cache—is now assuming some importance from the fact that the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company have established there a great depot for supplies. The dressed leather and rawhide carried to Fort St. James by this roundabout way was used for moccasins, snow-shoes, thongs for baling furs and other necessary articles.<sup>13</sup>

Each autumn John Stuart would collect his furs at Lake McLeod—packs from Stuart Lake, Fraser Lake and Fort George at the mouth of the Nechaco River swelled the returns of that post. The

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of Council, 1825. Certified transcript of original Ms. in Provincial Archives Department.

<sup>13</sup> Written in 1912.





peltries were made up in convenient bales, of which there might be a hundred or more, each weighing ninety pounds and each containing from fifty to sixty beaver, or a lesser number of large pelts. Then the head of the district would marshal his little brigade, and, with his precious bales, set off on his long and arduous journey to Fort Chipewyan, where he would spend a few days before embarking upon his homeward voyage with his supplies for the following years. Gathering stores of dried salmon, exchanging blankets, axes, gewgaws and such simple things for fur, foiling the machinations of the natives, preserving a semblance of law and order, taking out the returns and bringing in supplies—this was the order of the year's work in New Caledonia, as in all other places where the daring Nor'wester had planted his flag.

The furbearing animals of New Caledonia were then, as now, bears, black, brown and grizzly; foxes, red, cross, and silver; the wolverine, otter, fisher, lynx, martin, musquash, mink, ermine and—best known of all—the beaver.

The beaver skin was the current coin of the lawless realm of the furtrader. By the beaver skin the trader measured all things and for it he gave up all to pass his days in the wilderness, amidst savage and treacherous tribes. Strange as it may seem, the Indian trader often became deeply attached to his mode of life, which was wild and free enough to suit the taste of the most unconventional. He would take to wife, either temporarily or permanently, a Metis<sup>14</sup> or full blooded Indian and settle down to the enjoyment of domestic felicity on the frontier. Apparently nearly all of the furtraders high and low, had wives or mistresses of Indian extraction. Harmon, himself, in his youthful days, had married—that is according to the custom of the frontier—a beautiful Metis girl, who bore him fourteen children, and then, so says an old record, was as straight as an arrow. The historian of early New Caledonia was devotedly attached to his consort and determined to marry her upon his return to civilization, and no doubt he did so for he was a man of exemplary character.

This is a rather remarkable example of loyalty to a conjugal relationship which did not carry with it at that time an enduring obligation. While some of the traders remained loyal to their mistresses,

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<sup>14</sup> Metis—a name given to those of French Canadian Indian extraction.



there were others who looked lightly upon the marriage *à la mode* of the fur countries and left their women and children upon retiring to eastern Canada. It was not until long after Harmon's day that the courts of Upper Canada decided that a marriage according to the custom of the Indian country, where few priests or churches were to be found, was valid and binding. A somewhat celebrated case settled the question. A highly respected officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, well known in New Caledonia, had taken to wife an Indian woman, with whom he lived for many years and by whom he had several children. In course of time he retired to Montreal, where he met and married a lady of good family. Upon his death it was found that he had left his fortune to his relict, whereupon one of the sons by his Indian spouse sued in the courts for a portion of his father's estate, on the ground that the marriage with his mother, although not performed by church or state, was valid because it had been solemnized according to the custom of his mother's people. The court held that the first marriage was of full force and effect and declared the second null and void.<sup>15</sup> This just decision acted as a wholesome deterrent. Thereafter desertion of Indian wives and families became less frequent.

Because the tedious and difficult approach to New Caledonia offered almost insuperable obstacles to the exploitation of a promising district, it soon became apparent that the demands of the western territory would have to be met from another and more accessible quarter. By this time—1812-1813—the mighty labyrinth of the Columbia River had already become famous in the Indian Territories through the exertions of the Nor'westers and John Jacob Astor's agents—whose exploits and manoeuvrings will be more fully related presently. That noble river, it was hoped, would solve the problem with regard to the maintenance of the New Caledonian posts. If only a direct road to the Columbia could be discovered, then it would be an easy matter to carry supplies to, and to move furs from, Fort St. James on Stuart Lake. Then as now the problem of transportation was the one that most insistently pressed for consideration. Should a feasible route be found, a depot was to be established at the mouth of Western America's greatest fluvial artery.

In view of the urgency of the matter from a local point of view,

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<sup>15</sup> Connolly versus Connolly, Upper Canada Law Reports.











